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SC says critical views on govt. policies not anti-establishment

Court lifts telecast ban on Malayalam channel Media One; says unguided and ad hoc use of sealed covers infringes natural justice and open justice

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

> Independent Press is vital for the robust functioning of the democratic republic. Press has a duty to speak truth to power... A homogenised view on issues that range from socio-economic polity to political ideologies will present grave dangers to democracy. — SUPREME COURT

Lifting the telecast ban on Malayalam channel Media One, the Supreme Court on Wednesday rapped the government for silencing voices in the media who "speak truth to power" by branding them "anti-establishment", as well as for the state's "unguided and ad hoc" use of sealed covers in courts to outsmart citizens' rights to personal liberty, life and profession.

"The critical views about government policies cannot be termed anti-establishment. The use of such a terminology betrays an expectation that the Press must support the establishment... An independent Press is vital for the robust functioning of the democratic republic. The Press has a duty to speak truth to power and present citizens with hard facts... A homogenised view on issues that range from socio-economic polity to political ideologies will present grave dangers to democracy," a Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud observed in a 134-page judgment. The other judge on the Bench was Hima Kohli.

The court ordered the government to renew telecast permission to the channel within four weeks.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Indian agency gets gear from Pegasus rival

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

An Indian defence agency has been purchasing equipment from an Israeli spyware firm that is being billed as a potential Pegasus alternative, according to trade data reviewed by *The Hindu*.

The firm in question is Cognyte Software Ltd., which faces a class action lawsuit in the U.S. from investors.

"Cognyte regularly targeted journalists, dissidents, critics of authoritarian regimes, families of opposition, and human rights activists around the world, without their knowledge, and collected intelligence on these people by manipulating them to reveal information and/or by compromising their devices and accounts," U.S. law firm Kessler Topaz Meltzer & Check LLP said on Monday, pointing to a 'threat report' by Facebook parent Meta Platforms on the "Surveillance for Hire" industry.

The DIA purchased equipment from Israeli firm Cognyte.

Defence sources said on condition of anonymity that there is no equipment held with the Indian Army which can monitor endpoint communication devices such as smartphones.

However, for over three years, Cognyte and its then-parent firm Verint Systems Inc. have been supplying computer gear to the Signal Intelligence Directorate (SID), which comes under the Defence Ministry's Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA).

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Main suspect in Kerala train fire case arrested

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

The Maharashtra Anti-Terror Squad, in a joint operation with Central agencies, arrested the main suspect in the Kerala train fire case, which left three dead, from the Ratnagiri railway station in Maharashtra late on Tuesday.

Shahrukh Saifi, 24, a resident of Shaheen Bagh in Delhi, is accused of pouring an inflammable liquid on fellow passengers and setting them on fire on the Alappuzha-Kannur Executive Express near Elathur here on Sunday night.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Munirathna booked for 'hate speech'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Rajarajeshwarinagar police have registered an FIR against Horticulture Minister Munirathna, BJP MLA, for his reported hate speech against Christians in his constituency recently.

He allegedly said there were "conversion activities in the slums" and called on people to "hit and send them back" and he would look after them if there were repercussions. Mr. Munirathna was speaking at a campaign event in R.R. Nagar and later to a private Kannada news channel.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 3

NEARBY

Actor Sudeep to campaign for BJP

BENGALURU
Hoping to add 'star power' to their poll arsenal, the BJP in Karnataka has roped in actor 'Kiccha' Sudeep to campaign for the party in the Assembly elections. Mr. Sudeep, associated with the film industry for over 27 years, is also the anchor of the reality show *Big Boss.* » PAGE 4

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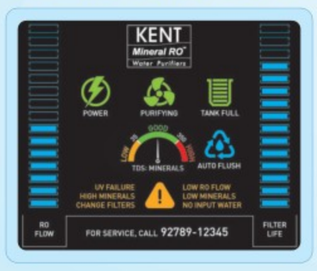

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Sugar production falls in the first six months of FY2022-23

3 In percentage. Sugar output fell to 299.6 lakh tonnes between October 2022 to March 2023, according to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA). It stood at 309.9 lakh tonnes in the corresponding period of the previous year. PTI

The number of people from outside J&K who bought land in the UT

185 people. Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai informed the Rajya Sabha that 127 outsiders bought land in the UT in 2022, while the number was 57 in 2021 and 1 in 2020 after Article 370 was abrogated on August 5, 2019. PTI

Tourist visas issued by the govt. from Oct. 6, 2021 to March 31, 2022

1.27 in lakh. The Minister for Tourism added that 2.27 e-tourist visas were also issued during this period. E-tourist visas are available for nationals of 166 countries, while regular tourist visas are available for most countries. PTI

Amount sanctioned under the Stand-Up India Scheme

40,700 in ₹ crore. To promote entrepreneurship at a grass root level, funds have been sanctioned by banks to over 1.8 lakh beneficiaries. The scheme was launched on April 5, 2016. PTI

State govt. vehicles older than 15 years have been scrapped

11,025 vehicles. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari informed that 7,750 private and 3,275 government vehicles were scrapped till March 31. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The NPCI's new circular on levy charges

What transactions does the new interchange charge via UPI apply to? What are prepaid payment instruments and are they currently interoperable? Why did the RBI mandate interoperability among different PPI issuers? How has this affected customers and merchants?

EXPLAINER

Lalatendu Mishra

GETTY IMAGES

The story so far:

Earlier last week, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which governs UPI, in a circular issued directly to banks, intimated that they can now levy charges on merchant transactions made through Prepaid Instrument wallets using UPI. After the information was leaked to the media, the NPCI issued a clarification stating that normal bank-to-bank UPI transactions will not be charged and that customers will not have to pay for transactions made via PPI on UPI. It said that the new interchange charges are only applicable for Prepaid Payment Instruments' (PPI) merchant transactions. The interchange fee, generally associated with card payments to cover the transaction cost, has now brought PPI wallets also under its fold.

What are PPIs?

Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) are payment methods that can be used to purchase goods and services and send/receive money by using the stored value in the wallet. Users have to pre-load the wallet with a desired amount. The amount can be loaded/reloaded against cash or through debit to bank account, or by using credit/debit cards, UPI, or any other approved payment method in India. PPIs can only be used in Indian rupees. PPIs can be in the form of mobile wallets, physical smart cards, secure tokens, vouchers, or any other method that allows access to prepaid funds.

What is PPI interoperability?

Previously, to use PPI at any merchant, it was necessary that the concerned merchant was engaged directly by the specific PPI issuer (specific network). All PPIs with which the merchant did not have a direct tie-up would get rejected. The most prevalent form of PPI used in the country is the mobile wallet, and this restriction meant that customers of one specific mobile wallet could spend the money in the wallet only at specific merchant locations which were directly tied up with the same PPI wallet provider. For example, if you had a Paytm or Mobikwik wallet, you could only use it at merchants that accepted Paytm or Mobikwik QR codes. To overcome this limitation of PPIs, the RBI has mandated interoperability among different PPI issuers. Subsequently, PPI issuers tied-up with NPCI for issuing (a) interoperable RuPay PPI cards or (b) creating interoperable wallets on UPI rails. Prepaid instruments in the form of wallets can now be linked to UPI, thus creating interoperable wallets on UPI rails.

How does PPI interoperability through UPI work?

After linking one's PPI wallet to UPI, customers can transact using Scan and Pay on all UPI interoperable QR codes. This will enable the use of PPI wallets at all merchant locations. The user can also send/receive money to any other wallet user.

Similarly, a merchant with any UPI QR code can now accept payments from any PPI issuer or mobile wallet. PPI on UPI will speed up the growth of merchant transactions in rural areas and further deepen digital financial inclusion by catering to use cases such as healthcare, transit, education, utility bills, etc.

Do merchants have to pay for accepting wallet transaction on UPI?

The PPI enabled merchants were already paying charges to the PPI issuer for acceptance of mobile wallets or prepaid cards. Now the charges are aligned at a network level with some standardisation. However, each merchant can work with their preferred acquiring entity.

Now, for using prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) such as gift cards, wallets etc for transactions on UPI, an interchange fee of up to 1.1% has been levied from April 1, 2023. The charges are applicable if the transaction is more than ₹2,000. If you are a merchant and accepting UPI payments from a customer's bank account, then there are no charges applicable. Charges are applicable only if you have accepted or consented for the transactions made using PPI Wallet.

Are there any charges to be paid by consumers holding wallets for PPI on UPI transactions?

Officially there are no charges to be paid by the customer. However, merchants may pass on the additional burden to customers by way of price increase or some other means.

THE GIST

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which governs UPI said that a new interchange charge would be applicable for PPI merchant transactions.
- Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) are payment methods that can be used to purchase goods and services and send/receive money by using the stored value in the wallet. Users have to pre-load the wallet with a desired amount.
- For using prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) such as gift cards, wallets etc for transactions on UPI, an interchange fee of up to 1.1% has been levied from April 1, 2023. The charges are applicable if the transaction is more than ₹2,000.

What is the open-source seeds movement?

What are IP rights on seeds and how are they inhibiting the freedom to innovate within the seeds sector?

Krishna Ravi Srinivas

The story so far:

Farmers have innovated and shared seeds without any intellectual property rights (IPR) for centuries. They also haven't sought exclusive rights over seeds and germplasm to prevent others from innovating on the seeds. However, with the emergence of the global IPR regime over plant varieties, there was a dire need to 'open-source' seeds.

What are plant-breeders' rights and patents?

The advent of hybrid seeds, scientific plant-breeding, and some other factors conferred developers of new varieties with the so-called plant breeders' rights (PBR) and patents, particularly in the U.S. In this regime, rights-holders could demand royalty on seeds and legally enforce IPR. In some national IPR regimes, rights-holders can also restrict the unauthorised use of seeds to develop new varieties. In 1994, the establishment of the World Trade Organization cast a global IPR regime over plant varieties. The Trade-Related IPR Agreement (TRIPS) required countries to provide at least one form of intellectual property (IP) protection. This consolidation of rights in the seeds sector raised concerns about the freedom to innovate. Unlike the Green Revolution, which was spearheaded by public-sector institutions, the genetic revolution in agriculture was led by the private sector, with seeds mostly availed as hybrids or protected by strong IPRs.

How is IP protected in agriculture?

There are two major modes of IPR protection in agriculture – plant-breeders' rights and patents. Together, they restrict farmers' rights and the freedom to develop new varieties using germplasm from IP-protected varieties, and have thus increased the number of IP-protected plant varieties. The high prices of genetically modified seeds and IP claims triggered many problems and issues, including the State's intervention in Bt cotton seeds in India. As public sector breeding declined and the private sector began to dominate the seed sector, the need for alternatives became keenly felt. This is when the success of open-source software inspired a solution. In 1999, plant-breeder named T.E. Michaels suggested an approach to seeds innovation based on the principles of open-source software.

What are 'open-source seeds'?

In 2002, Boru Douthwaite and I (independently) proposed an open-source model for seeds and plant varieties and scholars and civil-society members built on it. The German NGO Agrecol followed with a similiar initiative in Europe. In Agrecol's model, the user agrees *inter alia* to not patent seeds bought under the open-source licence. In the U.S., the open source seeds initiative opted for a pledge based model for sharing seeds.

In India, the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA), Hyderabad, developed a model that included an agreement between CSA and the recipient of the seed/germplasm. It is trying to use this approach through three farmer producer organisations engaged in seed production. Under India's Plant Variety Protection and Farmers' Rights Act 2001, farmers can register 'farmer varieties' if they meet certain conditions, and have the right to reuse, replant, and exchange seeds. However, they can't breed and trade in varieties protected under the Act for commercial purposes.

One potential application of the open-source approach is to use it in farmer-led seed conservation and distribution systems. There are many traditional-variety conservation and sharing initiatives in India involving farmers. Many of them focus on traditional varieties that are unique to specific regions or sites and/or have specific features. The model can also be used to promote farmer-led participatory plant-breeding exercises. Traditional varieties often lack uniformity and aren't of excellent quality for seed development and breeding purposes. Open-source principles can help overcome these two challenges by facilitating testing, improvisation, and adoption.

All of these will ultimately be beneficial to India's food security and climate resilience.

Krishna Ravi Srinivas is with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries, New Delhi. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

- In 1994, the establishment of the World Trade Organization cast a global IPR regime over plant varieties. This consolidation of rights in the seeds sector raised concerns about the freedom to innovate.
- There are two forms of IPR protection in agriculture — plant-breeders' rights and patents. Together, they restrict farmers' rights and the freedom to develop new varieties using germplasm from IP-protected varieties.
- The open-source approach in the seeds sector will lead to farmer-led seed conservation and distribution systems. There are many traditional-variety conservation and sharing initiatives in India involving farmers.

Construction of more lanes for Hebbal flyover stalled again; BDA waiting for design clearance

The project was initially proposed in 2015 to add additional lanes to the main ones of the flyover and build a unidirectional underpass for the traffic coming from the Tumakuru Road side and moving towards K.R. Puram

Suchith Kidiyoor
BENGALURU

A file photo of the pillars that the Bangalore Development Authority had erected to build additional loops to the Hebbal flyover.

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has again stalled the construction work of adding loops to the Hebbal flyover. In January, the authority resumed the construction of adding lanes to the existing flyover for the benefit of motorists coming from the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) side and entering the city.

The project was initially proposed in 2015 to add additional lanes to the main lanes of the flyover, and build a unidirectional underpass for the traffic coming from Tumakuru Road and moving towards K.R. Puram side. The estimated project cost was ₹74 crore. After starting the construction work, the BDA set 2018 as the deadline to complete the work. However, the agency failed to execute the project before the deadline. In 2019, the work was stalled after the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) raised objections over the construction of loops at level 2, citing that the project was coming in the way of the future expansion of Namma Metro on Outer Ring Road (from Kempapura to J.P. Nagar).

RITES study

Meanwhile, the State government roped in RITES (Rail India Technical and Economic Service) to carry out a study on how to decongest the busy junction and plan for the future integration of various modes of transport.

The RITES came out with a ₹250 crore worth project to decongest one of the major traffic bottlenecks in the city by building additional flyovers and others. Instead of implementing the RITES suggestions, the BDA took a decision to resume the work that was stalled in 2019.

In January, the contractor started construction on a service road near the Hebbal bus stop.

To facilitate the work, the road was barricaded, and traffic was diverted by the traffic police. A bus stop located near the subway was also shifted ahead. Now, the BDA has again suspended the work citing that third-party clearance for the design of adding an additional loop is pending.

Clearance awaited

An official of the BDA said, "The work has been temporarily stalled till we get the clearance on the design from a third party. When the project was proposed, there were plans to build additional two lanes. Now there are modifications in the design. From the Esteem Mall side, the additional loop starts with two lanes, and after the railway track, there is a plan to build three lanes towards Baptist Hospital. Once the design gets clearance, the contractor will resume the construction works."

When asked about what would happen to the giant pillar constructed as per the previous plans, the officials said, "The alignment of the project is changed now. Earlier, it was proposed to build the loops at level two, but we are constructing them at level one parallel to the existing lanes. These pillars will be razed down eventually."

The BDA has already spent close to ₹25 crore for building the giant pillar inside the mini forest located near the Hebbal flyover.

Special schools see rise in enrolment of students

Pavana J.
BENGALURU

Children taking the toy train at the World Autism Day awareness programme organised at Bal Bhavan, Cubbon Park, in Bengaluru on Wednesday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Nidhi Ray Tharakal, a parent of two twin boys with autism, moved to India during the peak of the pandemic in 2020. "Most institutions were closed when we first moved here. Mainstream schools that claimed to be inclusive said that online education for children with autism wouldn't work. The biggest schools in the city, which talk about inclusivity, do not have the faculty for children with special needs: they have no special educators," she said.

As Autism Awareness Month is under way, special schools have reported a significant increase in the enrollment of children with autism in schools. With this, educators and parents alike are looking for innovative ways to ensure that these students receive the support they need to thrive in the classroom.

"There has been an increase of almost 50% in the enrolment rates post the pandemic," said Bela Joshi, a managing trustee at Colours Centre for Learning. One of the reasons for this, according to Ms. Bela, was that due to being cooped up at home during the lockdown, a lot of children showed lesser progress in their learning and behavioural patterns.

Speaking about the number of schools in the city that cater to children on the spectrum, she said, "A lot of schools have shut down after the pandemic. There are more individual therapy and training centres than schools right now."

Most parents shy away from enrolling children in school because of the social stigma that exists, she said. Urging parents and guardians to seek help at any point, Ms. Joshi said children with autism could be educated at any age. "There is no age limit for learning, these students can be taught even during their 20s with the right kind of support."

Although a lot of schools that provide mainstream education are becoming more inclusive lately for children with disabilities, it is necessary to understand that not all of them are equipped to teach students on the spectrum, experts point out.

Santhi Karamcheti, one of the founding trustees and special educator at Eka Educational and Charitable Trust said, "Schools need to understand the specific needs of these children. Holistic education or training does not work for all," she said.

Children in mainstream schools need to be taught more about inclusivity and diversity, she added.

"Mainstream schools need to collaborate with professionals and conduct sessions where children are taught to be more sensitive towards children with disabilities," she said.

"India has improved in early intervention services in recent years, but we still have a long way to go. There are limited services available for older children and adults on the spectrum," said Dr. Vanita Rao from Sunshine Autism Trust.

Special education

However, Ms. Tharakal pointed out that special education comes at a special cost. "It is very expensive. The tuition fee is already so high. They need to also pay for any additional therapy the children need, which becomes very difficult for a salaried person," she said. Post the pandemic, she said that there had been a massive rise in the fee structure of many schools.

"The government needs to pay more attention. There is a lot of leverage given to people with disability on paper but it is hardly applied," she said.

Half-burnt undergarment helps police crack case of charred body found in car

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A half-burnt undergarment recovered from the charred body of a man has helped the police ascertain the identity of the deceased.

The Kodigehalli police on Wednesday cracked the case of an unidentified man's charred body found in an abandoned car near a garbage dump on Devinagar main road last Saturday.

There was no clue since the interiors of the car were gutted and the body charred, but the half-burnt underwear was a single piece of evidence.

The police photographed the evidence and began to analyse the CCTV footage to find out where the deceased was moving. Based on the CCTV footage details, the police started circulating the photograph along with the physical description of the body widely for a few days before they stumbled upon a family.

The family told the police that they were looking for their son, who was missing. The police showed them the half-burnt underwear, and they recognised it. The family had also filed a missing complaint with the police and was searching for him.

The deceased has been identified as Vinod, aged 40 years and unemployed. Further probe revealed that he had become an alcoholic after his wife separated from him, and he avoided going home and would often sleep in the abandoned car.

On the day of the incident, after getting drunk, Vinod lit a mosquito coil and placed it on the cushion of the backseat before sleeping. The burning coil fell on the cushion of the seat, resulting in the fire. As he was intoxicated and in deep slumber, Vinod was charred to death, the police investigations revealed.

Citizens seek withdrawal of cases against activists

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

More than 70 civil society organisations and 500 citizens on Wednesday complained to the Police Commissioner, urging him to withdraw an FIR filed against activists and citizens for protesting against the plan for a flyover on the Sankey Road in February.

"We are shocked to learn that the Sadashivanagar police have registered an FIR against 70 residents of Bengaluru. The citizens have been charged with crimes under Sections 143, 341, 283 and 149 of the IPC, 1860. It is inconceivable that a mere silent walk around a lake by the residents can be interpreted as any crime, let alone such serious ones," the letter stated.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

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RFP Notice

Sports Authority of India, NSSCV, Bangalore invites Request for Proposal (RFP) for following: -

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For more details please visit website http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, https://sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in/sai/, http://www.saisouth-bangalore.com.

The Last date of Submission of RFP is 17.04.2023 up to 16.00 hrs.

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Regional Director I/C

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1st A Main Road, Gururaja Layout,
Vibhutipura Extention, Doddankundi,
Bengaluru – 560037, Ph. +91-9440971415

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MY CLIENT **Ms. SOUMYA A.S.,** adult, D/o Mr. A.L. Sathyanarayana Gupta @A. L. S. Gupta, residing at No.8, Nandaram Singh Lane, Armstrong Road Cross, Bengaluru-560 001, has lost/misplaced the **Original Khatha**

Certificate bearing Ref. No. BDA/RON/C3/1744/07-08, dated 12-04-2007, issued by the Revenue Officer, B.D.A. North Range, Bangalore, pertaining to my Site No.1744, formed by BDA in ARKAVATHI 2ND BLOCK, SAMPIGEHALLI, BANGALORE. A Complaint has been lodged with the Bangalore City Police Unit, Bangalore, on 03/04/2023 vide Lost Report No.0521923/2023, with Bangalore City Police Unit, Bangaluru.

Any person/s having found and are in custody of the above mentioned Khatha Certificate may hand over the same to the undersigned/owner of the Site/Police Station and/or having any manner of claim or demand in respect of the said immovable property shall lodge the objections within **10 (Ten) days** from this day, failing which it shall be deemed that nobody else has any kind of claim, and the certified Duplicate Certificate shall be obtained from BDA Office, in lieu of the original certificate.

RAMESH D SHAH, ADVOCATE
No.1, 1st Floor, 4th Cross, Meenakshi Koil St., Cross, Shivajinagar, Bangalore-560051.
E-mail:rame3003@gmail.com

Bangalore Date : 05/04/2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby notified that my client proposes to purchase the property described in the schedule below from Sri. C.H. Susheelendra Rao, No.20, Srinivasa, BSK 3rd Stage, Behind Balaji Kalyana Mantapa, Bangalore South, Banashankari III Stage, Bengaluru-560085, Karnataka, who has represented that he purchased the Schedule Property from Bangalore Development Authority in terms of a Sale Deed dated 15/06/1989, registered as Document No.5308/1989-90 in Book-I, Volume-3197 at pages 51 to 52 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore. Persons objecting for the proposed purchase or having any right in the Schedule Property may lodge their objections and / or claims with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence within Fifteen (15) days from the date of this publication and objections and/or claims received thereafter will not be binding on my client and my client will proceed to purchase the below mentioned property as if there are no claimants/objections.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

House Property bearing Municipal No.719, 6th 'B' Cross, 3rd Block, Koramangala, Bangalore, built on site measuring East to West: 40 feet and North to South: 59 feet, in all measuring 2,360 Sq.ft and bounded by:

East by: Property bearing Site No.718,
West by: Property bearing Site No.720,
North by: Property bearing Site No.742; and
South by: Road.

Sd/-
Sri. KUSUMA R MUNIRAJU,
Sri. KUSUMA KAUSHIK
Advocates
No.101, 'EDEN PARK' No.20, Vittal Malayya Road, Bangalore-560001.
Tel: 080-22217971

BANGALORE
Dated: 04/04/2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that our client **Mr.Asish Thomas Koshy(SAIACS)** is intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from **Mr.Moses Vijaya Kumar S/o.Late.G.Sunder Raj,** any person/s objecting for the proposed purchase or are having any right, title, interest or any type of claim over the scheduled property is hereby called upon to file their objections/claims what so ever along with documentary proof within **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice with the under mentioned advocate failing which; our clients shall proceed and complete the sale transaction with the above stated person.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Site No.10, formed out of Property No.102/2, Situated at Kada Agarahara Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk Measuring East to West 50 Feet and North to South 30 Feet in all measuring 1500 Square Feet and bounded on the:
East by : Road, West by Site No.13, North by Site No.09, South by Site No.11

C.K.V.K. LAW ASSOCIATES
Mr. VENKATESH CHANDRAN M.A., L.L.B.
Advocates & Legal Consultants
Bangalore-43. M: 9845846428, 7204863700

DOCUMENT LOST

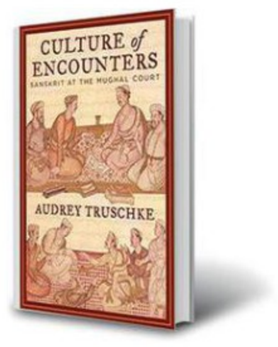
I, Sri. Shankar Malllappa and Smt. Meena R/a H.No. 662, 'Sai Siddha Krupa ' Kenchenahalli, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bangalore -98 we jointly do here by solemnly affirm and state on oath as that the property being at Gopasandra Village, Sarjapur Hobli, Anekal Tq, Bangalore Urban District, Bangalore – 560099 V.P.Khata No. 857, R.PD.R. Khata No. 150200102100700916, property No. 221 measuring E-W :60 Ft and N-S : 40 ft earlier the said property was Registered in the name of Syed Jameer vide Reg No. ANK-1-08012/2016-17 in C.D. No. ANKS- 418 , IN Book No. - 1 registered on 31.03.2017 at Anekal SRO . This Sale Deed was come into possession through M/s FORTUNE PROJECTS, Represented by its Managing Partner Mr. Mohammed Ghouse Farooq to Sri Syed Jameer . After this property was come into possession to Sri, Shankar Mallapa and Smt. Meena vide Document Reg No. ANK – 1- 08021/2016-17, in Book No. -1, C.S. No. ANKD 418, dated 31.03.2017 was lost while changing the house. Hence I made this affidavit for concern authorities to get the above and to get lost document in duplicate. I have also lodged Police Complaint regarding loss of my Original Certificate vide Loss of Document Report No.520479/01.04.2023. I further declare that the information furnished is true to the best of my knowledge and belief sworn before Advocate and Notary Ravi on 05.04.2023. If the above Original Documents are found please contact Mob : 9845124481

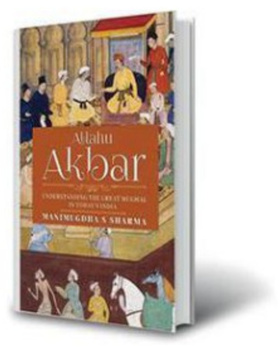
Sd/-
Ravi Advocate & Notary
No.2663/J, 6th 'B' Main, RPC Layout, Vijaynagar, Bangalore-560040

Place : Bangalore
Date : 05-04-2023

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Humayun's tomb. GETTY IMAGES





Understanding the Mughals: there are lessons to be learnt from every king

Historians have profiled the layered reigns of the Mughal kings, from Humayun to Akbar to Aurangzeb, who were men of action, aesthetes and dreamers, and contributed to the idea of the subcontinent

Ziya Us Salam

The National Council of Educational Research and Training has decided to drop certain chapters on the Mughal Empire from the CBSE Class 12 history textbooks. They include 'Kings and Chronicles; the Mughal Courts (C. 16th and 17th centuries)' from the book Themes of Indian History-Part II. This move is said to be an attempt at "syllabus rationalisation" to avoid "overlapping" and "irrelevant" portions.

Why do the Mughals need to be studied? The glory of the Mughal Age has been neatly summed up by Ebba Koch in her recent book, *The Planetary King: Humayun Padshah Inventor and Visionary on the Mughal Throne* where she writes, "The Mughal dynasty was perhaps one of the most glamorous and charismatic in the history of mankind. It was a driving concern of the first six padshahs to construct their image for posterity and be remembered as great rulers." Even in the 20th century there were voices that praised the Mughal emperors in the manner of court eulogists.

Reading the 'Baburnama'

It all began with Zahiruddin Babur. His eye for detail and his fine observation are on display in *Baburnama* translated by Dilip Hiro. Recalling the Battle of Panipat with Ibrahim Lodi, Babur writes, "20April/8Rajab) News came at dawn that the enemy was advancing in fighting array. We at once donned armour, armed and mounted....Our right wing was led by Humayun...Ibrahim was thought to have fled....It was the Afternoon Prayer when Ali Khalifa Barla's brother-in-law, who had found Ibrahim Lodi's body in a heap of the dead, brought in his head. That day we appointed Humayun to ride fast and light to Agra...." It was in Agra that Humayun was to lay his hands on the Kohinoor which he offered to Babur soon after, an offer Babur graciously declined.

The reign of Humayun which commenced in 1530 was in turn followed by one of the most vibrant periods in Indian history under Jalaluddin Akbar. The emperor laid emphasis on culture and inter-religion mingling like none other. As Audrey Truschke writes in *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court*, "In the 1580s, Emperor Akbar ordered the translation of the Sanksrit Mahabharata into Persian. The newly minted Mughal epic, called the Razmnamah (Book of War), would prove a seminal work....The Mughals took up the Mahabharata as part of the larger translation movement that Akbar had inaugurated in the 1570s...As a prince Jahangir commissioned a Persian Yogvashishta, (Vashishta's Treatise on Yoga), a philosophical work."

Akbar's middle ground

There was a reason why Akbar got the Mahabharata translated.

Quoting Abul Fazl, noted author Ira Mukhoty explains in *Akbar: The Great Mughal*, "He decided to translate the authentic books of different groups into another language, so that both groups could have the pleasure of benefitting from the perfect knowledge, thus forgetting their enmity and hostility and seeking divine truth." This move of Akbar was in consonance with his idea behind setting up Ibadat Khana. As noted by author Manimugdha Sharma in his book *Allahu Akbar: Understanding the Great Mughal in Today's India*, "When Akbar returned to Fatehpur Sikri in 1575 from the conquest of Bengal, he carried with him a favourable impression of something that the late Sultan Sulaiman Karrani of Bengal used to do. That, coupled with his own inner churning, was manifested in a building that housed the first nursery of what is today called secularism in India. It was the Ibadat Khana.... The Ibadat Khana became a unique experiment in improving the theological discourse. It was a bid to end conflicts among rival religions by creating a middle ground."

The Ibadat Khana was constructed around the room of Shaikh Abdullah Niyazi Sirhindi, a disciple of Shaikh Salim Chishti who later became a devotee of Lord Shiva. "That this journey of the Ibadat Khana began from the room of a Sufi who became a follower of Shiva makes it a very interesting beginning," Sharma writes. The place became a meeting point for not only Islamic scholars but also Brahmins, Christians, Jains, Zoroastrians, Jews and scholars of other religious denominations for a free and frank exchange of views. Unsurprisingly, the Ramayana, Rajatarangini and other works were also translated during this period.

Rulers and myths

Then there was Shah Jahan, the man who built the Taj Mahal and the Lal Quila from where the Prime Minister addresses the nation. He was followed by Aurangzeb. He defies easy summarisation. As Truschke writes in *Aurangzeb: The Man and The Myth*, "He was a man of studied contrasts...Aurangzeb was preoccupied with order – even fretting over the safety of the roads but found no alternative to imprisoning his father. He also sewed prayer caps...He was a connoisseur of music and even fell in love with the musician Hirabai.... Aurangzeb was an enigmatic king." If Akbar has lessons for today's politics, so does Aurangzeb, albeit for entirely different reasons.

To quote Koch, art historian Stuart Welch, who taught Indian art at Harvard, once said: "What would our lives be without those fascinating Mughals!'" She mentions the globe-trotter and interculturalist Count Herman Keyserling, who was in India in 1911-12, hailing the Mughals as the "grandest rulers brought forth by mankind...they were men of action, refined diplomats, experienced judges of the human psyche and at the same time aesthetes and dreamers." For this and many other reasons, students should not be deprived of reading up on the Mughals in the subcontinent.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Today's quiz is about uranium, other radioactive elements, and their roles in our lives

Vasudevan Mukunth

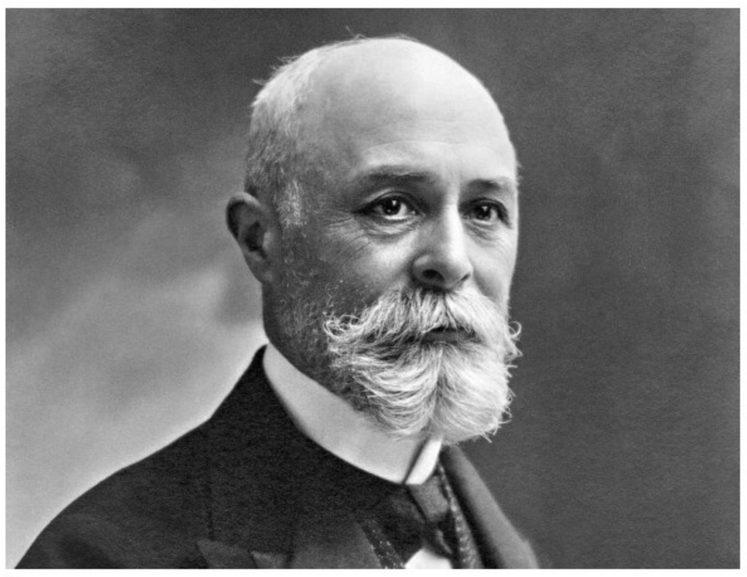
QUESTION 1
On March 31, physicists in Japan reported discovering a new uranium isotope. Its atomic number is 92 and mass number is 241. How many neutrons does it have?

QUESTION 2
Uranium is the most abundant actinide element. Which is the second-most abundant, being named for a Norse god and found in large quantities in India?

QUESTION 3
Which is the only actinide named after two continents, and used in smoke detectors?

QUESTION 4
The 'magic number' is a number of protons or neutrons in a nucleus that makes it highly resistant to radioactive decay. What's the element with the highest 'magic number', making it a good radiation shield?

QUESTION 5
Scientists estimate the age of dead organic matter by measuring how much _____ it absorbed when alive. From the late 1800s, the use of fossil fuels reduced the levels of this isotope in the environment. Name it.



Visual question:
Who is this man and what is his connection to radioactive decay?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The first ship which journeyed to the U.K. on April 5, 1919. **Ans: SS Royalty built by Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd**
2. This place had the world's earliest known dock and this civilization traded using this dock. **Ans: Lothal; Indus Valley Civilization**
3. The first attested attempt to organise a navy in India is attributed to this empire in India. **Ans: The Mauryan Empire**
4. This was a 56-gun fourth-rate ship of the line of the Royal Navy. **Ans: HMS Hindostan**
5. The geographical term used to classify maritime forces capable of operating globally. **Ans: Blue-water navy**
6. The first engagement in action of the Indian Navy, following India's independence. **Ans: The first engagement in action was against the Portuguese Navy during the liberation of Goa in 1961**
Visual: Identify this former aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy. **Ans: INS Viraat**
Early Birds: Sonal Mehta| K. N. Viswanathan| Indra Sharma| Abhishek Sarkar| Parminder Singh

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Mr. T. Satyanarayana, Lecturer in Zoology, Tuni, wants to know the meaning of "gotta"."

" "Gotta" is colloquial for 'have got to'.

I have got to go.

In very informal speech, 'have' is dropped and 'got to' becomes 'gotta'. The 'a' in 'gotta' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'China'. 'I gotta go tomorrow' means 'I have got to go tomorrow'. 'Gotta' is used only in highly informal speech. It is better to avoid it in speech. In writing, it is generally found in dialogues in novels."

"Mr. N. Shafik Ahmed, Neelifield Mosque Street, Ambur, wants to know the meaning of 'Utopian'."

"Sir Thomas More wrote a book in 1516 called 'Utopia'. 'Utopia' is the name given by him to an imaginary island where everything was perfect. He coined the word 'utopia' by combining two Greek words 'ou', not plus 'topos', place. The word literally means 'nowhere'. Now it means 'an imaginary place with a perfect social and political system, ideally perfect place or state of things'. 'Utopian ideals' are perfect ideals that are impracticable. A Utopian is an idealist who believes in the possibility of creating a perfect society."

"Mr. Mahe Jabeen Vali, Chanchalguda, Hyderabad, wants to know the meaning of 'namby-pamby'."

"It means 'wishy-washy, insipid, weakly sentimental, affectedly or childishly simple'. 'He is a namby-pamby' means he is a silly, sentimental person. A namby-pamby writer is a silly, feeble writer.

It is namby-pamby stuff.

Ambrose Philips, an English poet (1675-1749) was given the nickname 'Namby-Pamby' for his feeble poetry. Now it is used with people and their work."

"Miss K. Annapurna, Avadi, Madras, wants to know the pronunciation of 'gratuitous'."

"The 'g' in the word is pronounced like the 'g' in 'go'. The 'a' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'China'. 'Tui' rhymes with 'dewy'. The 'ou' is pronounced like the final sound in 'China'. The stress is on the second syllable. 'Gratuitous' means (a) 'got or given free' (b) 'uncalled for, unwarranted'. In the sense of (a), the word is rarely used these days. It is in the sense of (b) that it is mostly used now.

It was a gratuitous insult.

He is a gratuitous liar.

He was offended by the gratuitous advice she offered him.

Published in The Hindu on July 21, 1987.

Word of the day

Smidge:
a tiny or scarcely detectable amount

Synonyms: shred, iota, tittle, whit

Usage: *She came to the event without a smidge of makeup on her face.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/smidgepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈsmɪdʒ/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Cow vigilante Puneeth, aides held in Rajasthan

They were on the run after the murder of a truck driver at Sathanur; they were allegedly involved in several acts of cow vigilantism and campaigns against minorities

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In the net: Puneeth Kerehalli (centre) and his associates arrested on Wednesday in Rajasthan.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ramanagara police arrested on Wednesday cow vigilante Puneeth Kerehalli and four of his associates in Rajasthan, where they were on the run after allegedly killing Idrees Pasha during an alleged cow rescue operation on April 1.

The other accused have been identified as Gopi, Pawan Kumar, Suresh Kumar and Pilling Ambigar. They are part of the Puneeth's 'Rashtra Rakshana Pade', a self-styled Hindutva organization Kerehalli floated recently and is accused of indulging in several acts of cow vigilantism and communal campaigns against minorities.

The case had triggered criticism of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government as it came days ahead of the Assembly polls to be held on May 10.

The Opposition has accused the government of a conspiracy to fan communal tensions and protect the accused.

Thirty-nine-year-old Idrees Pasha was part of the three-member team transporting cattle they bought from a fair in Maddur on March 31. They were intercepted by Kerehalli and his associates later that night at Sathanur near Kanakapura.

Pasha was found dead nearby hours later. His family alleged that there were "burn-like injuries" on his body and accused the cow vigilantes of torturing and killing him.

Based on his brother's complaint, Sathanur Police registered a murder case against Kerehalli and his associates, and since then, the accused have been on the run.

The family members, speaking to *The Hindu*, demanded stringent action against the accused for taking the law into their hands and killing someone in the name of religion. However, police sources say the body did not have any antemortem injuries and only a postmortem report, which is awaited, can indicate if there was really foul play.

The accused soon switched off their mobile and escaped to Hubballi and Belagavi before reaching Gujarat via Maharashtra.

Though they were on the move most of the time, Kerehalli often switched on his phone to upload video messages on his social media handles, which eventually gave them away, sources said.

On April 4, Puneeth Kerehalli posted a video accusing opposition party leaders Siddaramaiah and H.D. Kumaraswamy of being in collusion with 'cow killers'.Police teams following their movements alerted their Rajasthan counterparts, who tracked them down and picked them up from a town called Banswara in the State. A team of State police has left for Rajasthan to secure their custody and bring them to Sathanur.

"The accused have more than 10 cases pending against him which will also be probed," said Karthik Reddy, SP, Ramanagara. Responding to a question from the media, he said no acts of vigilantism would be tolerated and requested members of the public to inform the police of any such acts of moral policing or vigilantism.

UVCE seats to be filled through CET and JEE in 75:25 ratio

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

A total of 75% of undergraduate seats at the University of Visvesvaraya College of Engineering (UVCE), the first autonomous State university on the lines of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), will be filled through the Common Entrance Test (CET) conducted by the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) while the remaining 25% seats will be filled through the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) as all India quota seats for the 2023-24 academic year.

The State government has submitted the proposal to the NTA in this regard and is waiting for its consent. The UVCE was formed as an autonomous university in March 2022, and the government has decided to develop the institution on the lines of the IIT. In the 2022-23 academic year, the government filled all undergraduate course seats through CET only. Among 744 Bachelor of Engineering (BE) and Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch) seats in UVCE, the Civil Engineering branch has 126 seats. The mechanical branch has 168 seats, Computer Science 74, Information Science 63, Electrical and Electronics 84, Electronic and Communication 126, the Artificial Intelligence Engineering branch has 63, and the B.Arch branch has 40 seats. Speaking to *The Hindu*, H.N. Ramesh, Principal of UVCE, said, "An autonomous university on the lines of the IIT, filling seats through State and national entrance tests in the 75:25 ratio is a must according to the UVCE Act. If the NTA gives consent, a total of 558 seats will become State quota seats and 186 seats will become all-India quota seats among 744 undergraduate seats."

Text & Context
A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (April 6, Thursday), the following explainer is available:

- Will consumers now have to pay for transactions made with PPIs via UPI? **bit.ly/consumersppi**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access this article. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access the article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

From Page One

Munirathna booked for 'hate speech'

Manoj Kumar, team lead of the Election Flying Squad-11 of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, had lodged a complaint against the Minister, based on which the R.R. Nagar police registered a case against him under various sections of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code for promoting enmity between different groups.

INBRIEF

39th graduation day of Ramaiah Medical College

As many as 335 graduates received the medical degree certificates and 31 graduates were awarded medals at the Ramaiah Medical College's (RMC) 39th graduation day ceremony held recently. Balram Bhargava, professor and head of cardiology; chief, Cardiothoracic Sciences Center, AIIMS, New Delhi, and former Director-General, ICMR and Secretary, Department of Health Research, was the chief guest at the event and Ahsanuddin Amanullah, judge, Supreme Court, India, was the guest of honour. M.R. Jayaram, Chairman of Gokula Education Foundation who presided over the function said, "This is the time for introspection. You should decide who you are, what you want to be, and program yourself to implement the knowledge you have gained."

Canara Bank introduces payroll account

Canara Bank has introduced a premium payroll account designed to meet all banking requirements of its salaried customers. The product comes with multiple features, including free term life insurance, insta overdraft, free personal air accident insurance cover.

Water adalat today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will hold water adalat on Thursday from 9.30 a.m. to 11 a.m. in various parts across the city to address the issues related to water billing, delay in providing water supply and sanitary connections, delay in converting from domestic connection to non-domestic connection and other related problems.

According to a BWSSB release, the adalat will be held at East 1-1, East 2-1, South East 1, South East 4, West 1-1, West 2-1, North West 1, North West 3, Central 1-1, North East 1, and North 1-1 sub divisions. Water Adalat on Thursday.

Timings
BENGALURU

THURSDAY, APR. 06		
RISE	06:13	SET 18:31
RISE	18:47	SET 06:14
FRIDAY, APR. 07		
RISE	06:12	SET 18:31
RISE	19:38	SET 06:51
SATURDAY, APR. 08		
RISE	06:12	SET 18:32
RISE	20:31	SET 07:32

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	33	25
Mysuru	34	19
Bengaluru	34	22

Bengaluru Today
32°C Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant. Spell of rain or thundershower is likely.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
33°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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IIHR to hold exclusive 'appe midi' fair where 100 varieties to be on display

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

Thanks to the growing popularity of 'appe midi' (tender mango in Kannada), the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (ICAR-IIHR) in Hesaraghatta for the first time will conduct an exclusive 'appe midi' mango fair, where 100 varieties of such mangoes will be displayed.

Appe midi is a traditional pickling variety of mango from Karnataka, which is grown in the Malnad region of the State-especially in Sirsi, Sagara, Siddapur, Thirthahally, Kumata, Sakleshpur, Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru.

The fair will be held on April 12 and 13 on the IIHR campus in Hessarghatta.

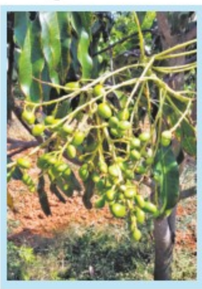
Creating awareness

Speaking to *The Hindu*, M. Sankaran, Principal scientist, division of fruit crops, ICAR-IIHR, said, "Appe midi mangoes have a unique position with respect to the diversity of pickling mango varieties. Appe midi is the king of all tender mangoes as far as its use in the pickle industry is concerned. Since there is a demand and awareness has to be created on this variety of mangoes, we thought of conducting an exclusive fair." The IIHR will display 100 varieties of tender mangoes at the fair, which are preserved by IIHR and also grown by farmers in various parts of the State. "The custodian farmers from across the State will participate at the fair where 100 appe midi mango genotypes will be displayed. The pickle manufacturers will also sell their products made of tender mango. Apart from this, we will also distribute limited appe midi mango saplings to farmers," Mr. Sankaran added. According to IIHR, the pickles prepared from appe midi mangoes make for an exquisite culinary experience. The demand for pickles varies from 4,000 to 5,000 tonnes per year, translating to ₹100 crore per year.

"A good quality tender mango costs ₹2 to 3; the price for a quintal could go up to almost ₹6,000, depending on demand and availability. Since the supply of appe midi meets only one-tenth of demand in the market, they are often mixed in with ordinary tender mangoes. This is not an organised market compared to others. Appe midi products have a high potential for marketing and need attention for conservation. The mango's unique size and taste make its pickle one of the best in the country, with its fragrance so strong that adding just a few midis to an ordinary pickle can change its taste and smell," Mr. Sankaran explained.

A wild appe midi tree can yield several tonnes of tender mango, with features varying from tree to tree. In Karnataka, 100 farm households are engaged in making appe midi pickles producing at least 100 tones of pickle a year. ICAR-IIHR has so far surveyed, collected and conserved more than 250 accessions of appe midi mangoes. These mangoes have a huge market in Goa, T.N. and Kerala, says IIHR.

King of tender mangoes



- Demand for appe midi mango pickles varies from 4,000 to 5,000 tons per year
- ₹100 crore market per year
- Good quality tender mango costs ₹2 to ₹3
- Price for a quintal could go up to almost ₹6,000 depending on demand and availability
- 100 farm households are engaged in making appe midi pickles
- Manufacturers produce at least 100 tones of pickle a year

Undertrial attempts suicide

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Panic gripped prison officials for some time when an undertrial who was being escorted to the Assistant Superintendent of Prisons' chamber allegedly attempted to end his life.

On Tuesday, as part of the random checks, a team comprising jailor Prabhu Khandre, and his assistant Mohammed Ghouse, carried out surprise checks at the barracks of the central prison of Parappana Agrahara. While inspecting a barrack in the basement of the hospital ward, the inspection team found two mobile phones, two SIM cards and a charger from under trail prisoner Suresh Kumar.

When he failed to give a suitable response, Suresh Prabhu was escorted to the Assistant Superintendent of Prison's office for further questioning.

As he was about to enter, Suresh Kumar made an attempt to injure himself. The officials intervened and saved him.

The Suresh Kumar was later admitted to a prison hospital, and security personnel were deployed to monitor him around the clock.

The officials are waiting for him to recover to question the source of the mobile phones.

Based on the complaint filed by B. Mallikarjuna, senior prison official, a case was filed against Suresh Kumar, charging him under Section 424 (Fraudulent removal or concealment of property of himself or any other person) and Section 427 (mischief) for further investigations.

The police will also question Suresh Kumar after he is recovered.

(Those in distress or having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahaya Vani Ph.: 104 for help)

Row over loud music: Army colonel's brother succumbs to injuries

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 54-year-old man, who had allegedly been assaulted by neighbours for objecting to loud music at night, succumbed to injuries at a private hospital on Tuesday.

According to the police, Lloyd Nehemiah, brother of Colonel David Nehemiah who is serving in Kashmir, had objected to his drunk neighbours creating a ruckus and playing loud music, which was disturbing his bedridden mother. The accused – Ram Samanth Rai, Basudev Samanth Rai and Abhishek Singh – allegedly assaulted Lloyd and his sister. Neighbours rushed to the rescue, and also alerted the police control room. Police took Lloyd and the accused to the station where both parties filed a complaint against each other.

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Britannia Industries Limited
BRITANNIA

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR REGISTRATION IN TENDER PROCESS FOR SCRAP SALES

Britannia Industries Limited (BIL) is in the process of floating tender for sale of process defectives, used polybags, plastic drums, corrugated boxes & miscellaneous scrap from its Factory / Depot locations across South Region.

Interested parties are requested to send copies of the following documents/ information to enable BIL to shortlist the eligible parties to participate in the tender / e-bid process.

Documents required

1. Partnership Deed or Memorandum and Articles of Association and Certificate of Incorporation.
2. Copy of GST registration certificate 3. PAN Card
4. Cattle feed certificate or cattle farming license. 5. Shop & Establishment Certificate.
6. License from designated pollution control board –

In addition, following information is required to be submitted in the format given below:

Sl	Particulars	Details
1.	Are you a registered scrap dealer?	Yes / No
2.	No of years of experience as scrap dealer	Years
3.	Major companies with whom you are currently associated as scrap contractor **Contact details in the company (For each company)** i. Name of company ii. Name of the Dealing manager from the company iii. Contact no iv. Email id	
4.	No of years of experience as scrap dealer for Britannia	
5.	Turnover of the company Rs lacs	

Send the above documents and information in a sealed envelope clearly indicating on the face of the envelope **"Expression of Interest in Scrap contract"** to the address mentioned below on or before **15.04.2023.**

Regional Purchase Manager
Britannia Industries Limited, One IndiaBulls Park, Plot No.4, 5th floor, Tower B,
3rd Main Road, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai - 600058

The aforesaid is only an Invitation to express interest for participating in the tender for scrap sale and BIL at all times reserves the right to adjourn /postpone /cancel the whole tender/e-bid process and /or to reject any or all the tenders received, at its sole discretion, without assigning any reason whatsoever.

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INBRIEF

Poll duty: Association seeks relaxation for some teachers

Karnataka State Primary School Teachers' Association has submitted a memorandum to the Election Commission seeking relaxation from poll duty for teachers above 55 and those with young children or suffering from illnesses.

Shambhulinganagowda Patil, president of the association, said, "Teachers above 55 years suffer from various illnesses and have other problems. The government has also provided relaxation from transfer for teachers above 55 years of age and women teachers above 50. Therefore, we request the EC to give relaxation to teachers above 55 from election duty." He also said that the Commission should provide basic facilities like toilets, drinking water and food for retaining officers and others in voting centres. After election duty, it should provide proper vehicle facilities from the taluk centres to their native places.

L.R. Shivarame Gowda joins Bharatiya Janata Party

Former Mandya MP L.R. Shivarame Gowda joined the BJP on Wednesday. Mr. Gowda, who has represented Nagamangala constituency in the State Assembly earlier, joined the party in the presence of its State president Nalin Kumar Kateel at the party State office in Bengaluru. Mr. Gowda, who has been with both the JD(S) and Congress earlier, said the workers were getting 'suffocated' in both the parties in Mandya district.

Election Commission makes seizures of over ₹69.36 crore

Since March 29 when the Model Code of Conduct came into force in Karnataka, the Election Commission made seizures totalling ₹69.36 crore, including cash, liquor, drugs, and metals. It seized cash and articles worth nearly ₹58 crore from March 9 to 27. After MCC came into force, the amount of cash seized was ₹22.75 crore, while liquor worth ₹24.45 crore, narcotics worth ₹56 lakh, precious metals worth ₹9.56 crore, and other items (freebies) worth ₹12.02 crore were seized, said a release from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka. In the last 24 hours, officials have seized cash worth ₹2 crore in Belagavi Rural, ₹56 lakh in Tumakuru Rural ₹32.32 lakh in Davanagere South, and ₹1.72 crore in Humnabad constituencies.

Sudeep to canvass for BJP; says he will neither join the party nor contest polls

The actor, from the Valmiki community, said he was campaigning out of gratitude to Bommai

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Hoping to add 'star power' to their poll arsenal, the BJP in Karnataka has roped in Kannada actor 'Kiccha' Sudeep to campaign for the party in the forthcoming Assembly elections. Sudeep, associated with the film industry for over 27 years, is also the anchor of the popular reality show *Big Boss*.

Announcing his decision at a press conference in Bengaluru on Wednesday, attended by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, the actor, however, insisted that he would not join the BJP. He added that his decision to campaign did not hold any "political intention." "I am basically expressing gratitude to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai for standing by me in my formative years. I have always considered him my uncle, as I have been seeing him since my childhood. I am here only to express my support to him. It is a human connect. I would have done this irrespective of the party he is representing," the actor said.

Actor Sudeep and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai at a press conference, in Bengaluru on Wednesday. K. MURALI KUMAR

> Bankruptcy of BJP in Karnataka is clear. As no one turns up to listen to CM Bommai and BJP leaders, they now rely upon film stars to draw crowd. People, not film stars, will decide fate of Karnataka.
>
> **RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA,** AICC general secretary in charge of Karnataka

> Film actors have always campaigned on behalf of their friends across political parties. While their fans come to see them at rallies, I don't think they can swing votes. But actors have fans across all sections of society. I do not want to misuse my personal friendship with them by forcing them to take a partisan stand.
>
> **H.D. KUMARASWAMY,** JD(S) leader and former Chief Minister

The 49-year-year-old multilingual actor belongs to the ST community of Valmiki, that has a dominant presence in a sizeable number of constituencies.

Karnataka Votes 2023

The BJP is expected to use him strategically in some constituencies. He also has a significant fan following among youth.

The CM said, "Sudeep's decision to campaign for us has added a huge strength. We will effectively utilise this by considering his busy schedule." Sudeep said that he would campaign for "a few select candidates" to be decided by Mr. Bommai.

"It is humanly impossible for me to campaign for everyone," Mr. Sudeep said. When asked if he would support the BJP's ideology, he was guarded in his reply. "As a citizen and tax payer, I see several good things happening. But as citizens, we cannot be cent per cent satisfied. But I agree upon and respect several decisions taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, such things have nothing to do with my coming here to announce that I will campaign."

He burst into laughter when asked if he had decided to campaign 'under pressure' and fear that IT may be used against him. "I am not a person who will buckle under pressure," he said. To a query on whether he had been paid huge sums of money to campaign for party, he shot back, "You think that I do not have other means to earn."

To another query on his stand related to allegations that BJP dispensation was collecting 40% commission from contractors, he said: "I believe in the law of land. I am sure that if there are any such things, the law will look into it."

Ban sought on Sudeep's films, TV shows, ads until polls end

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

K.P. Sripal, an advocate based in Shivamogga, has appealed to the EC to stop screening films, TV shows, and advertisements that feature Kannada actor Sudeep, as he has become a star campaigner for the BJP.

In a letter to the EC and the district returning officer of Shivamogga, Mr. Sripal said the actor himself had announced that he would campaign for a particular party. Films, TV shows, and advertisements featuring him could influence voters, leading to a violation of the model code of conduct. The EC should stop their screening on television and in theatres until the elections are over, he urged.

On Prakash Raj

Refusing to comment on the issue with actor Prakash Raj, who had earlier tweeted that Sudeep is "not a person who would sell himself by associating with the BJP," Sudeep only said, "I have done a film with Prakash Raj. He is a very good artist. I am waiting to do the next film with him."

Safari suspended for public in Bandipur ahead of PM's visit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Bandipur Tiger Reserve on Sunday. M.A. SRIRAM

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

There will be no safari for the general public from Thursday to Sunday in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Project Tiger reserve in Bandipur on April 9.

The Prime Minister is visiting Mysuru in connection with the commemorative event to mark 50 years of Project Tiger which will be held in the city from April 9 to 11.

The Chamarajanagar district administration has also ordered all homestays, hotels and resorts within the Bandipur Eco Sensitive Zones to remain shut during the period.

The Deputy Commissioner of Chamarajanagar D.S. Ramesh said that Prime Minister Modi will be in Bandipur on April 9 and in view of the preparations necessary for his visit besides security issues, safari has being suspended for the general public from Thursday to 9.

He said that all homestays, hotels, lodges and resorts within the Bandipur ESZ will also be closed during the period and will be out of bounds for the tourists and the general public.

Mr. Modi will arrive in Mysuru on April 8 evening and stay overnight before leaving for Bandipur on April 9 morning. Besides Bandipur, the Prime Minister will also visit Theppakadu elephant camp at Mudumalai in the neighbouring State of Tamil Nadu and interact with mahouts Bomman and Bellie who starred in the Oscar-winning documentary 'The Elephant Whisperers'.

The Prime Minister will then fly in an helicopter to reach Mysuru and take part in the inaugural session of Commemorating 50 Years of Project Tiger at the Karnataka State Open University auditorium.

The schedule of events include release of tiger estimation summary report and declaration of tiger numbers; release of publication 'Amrit Kaal Ka Vision' for Tiger Conservation; release of a commemorative coin; release of management effectiveness evaluation report (2022) for tiger reserves and screening of short film - Success of Project Tiger.

The post-inaugural session will include felicitations for outstanding contribution in the field of tiger conservation by the Ministry of Enviroment, Forest and Climate Change followed by technical sessions in which experts and representatives from tiger range countries will take part.

KASSIA opposes promises made to voters which will come at 'stiff price to taxpayers'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka Small Scale Industries' Association (KASSIA) has opposed the increasing trend of big promises made by political parties to woo voters in the ensuing elections to the Karnataka Legislative Assembly which will come at "stiff price to tax payers."

In a press statement, KASSIA president K.N. Narasimhamurthy, said, "We are hearing all kinds of promises made by the political parties like free power, free water, free doles to youth and women, which will come at a stiff price to the taxpayer. Instead we would like them to go before the voters on a development plank which is of utmost concern to the taxpayers, the MSMEs and the common citizen."

More industrial estates

The KASSIA president pointed out that the expectation of the MSMEs was about having more industrial estates at the district level. "Presently, less than 9% of entrepreneurs only operate in government established industrial estates developed by the Karnataka State Small Industries' Development Corporation (KSSIDC) and the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB). So the demand-supply mismatch for industrial estates is more than 90%. The political parties' manifestos should resonate with such ground-level demands of industry," the president said in a press release.

> We are happy that the GST collections in the last month crossed ₹10,000-plus crore, but the taxpayers should not allow the political parties to put it to wasteful use.
>
> **K.N. NARASIMHAMURTHY** president, KASSIA

"Even when it comes to KSSIDC/KIADB estates, there is no proper basic infrastructure and underground drainage system. And the approach road to many of these estates is not even wide enough to allow smooth passage of large goods vehicles. Such is the pathetic state of infrastructure which micro and small scale industries are working in," he lamented and added that if the political parties make a tour of the industrial estates, they would be embarrassed, which 'we endure every day,'" he said in a release.

"We are happy that the GST collections in the last month crossed ₹10,000 plus crore, but the taxpayers should not allow the political parties to put it to wasteful use," Mr. Narasimhamurthy argued. "The political parties should focus on how to create jobs, meeting and revamping infrastructure, and providing better governance."

KASSIA hoped that the taxpayers would come together to put pressure on authorities such as the Election Commission and put an end to "freebies culture", he said.

Idea of Hindutva making a dent in Vokkaliga heartland, says Krishna

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

The "idea of Hindutva" is making a dent in the Vokkaliga heartland of Karnataka, observed S.M. Krishna, former Chief Minister and senior politician who now calls himself "a bystander" after his retirement from active politics.

He was responding to a query from *The Hindu* on whether BJP's attempt to break into the Vokkaliga heartland in the forthcoming Assembly elections would have an impact. "People in Mandya, Mysuru and Hassan are beginning to realise that Hindutva is an idea which needs to be pursued more vigorously than it has been so far," he told *The Hindu*. "I think the fervent is going on and we should watch the outcome of it."

S.M. Krishna

Early signs

When asked what are the kinds of signals he was seeing in this region, an area that has been voting for JD (S) or Congress, Mr. Krishna elaborated that none of the BJP leaders campaigned in Mandya during last Assembly Elections, as the constituency was "a hopeless case" for the party. However, the party candidate (Chandagalu Shivanna) still polled 2 lakh votes, he said. "None of us went there, but people still volunteered and voted," he argued. Mr. Krishna further said now with another Assembly Election close at hand, the trend was only gaining momentum. "I think Prime Minister Nadrendra Modi's interaction with the people of this State and visits of Home Minister and other leaders of the party are going to make a difference. Whether it is enough to win is open to questions, but a difference has been made,' he asserted.

From religion to politics

According to him, Vokkaligas are very religious and are now beginning to get exposed to the idea that Hindutva comes with the political dimension. "These two merge well and that should be a starting point... Kannadigas, especially people in Mandya, Mysuru and Hassan, are very religious and because of their religious affiliation they get attracted to this ideology,' he anticipated.

In response to another query on who in his family would carry forward his political legacy, Mr. Krishna categorically said, "None of my daughters are interested in politics. They are busy running their own industries. My grandchildren too are involved in making a fight to survive in this competitive world and politics has least attraction."

Ahead of Assembly elections, politicians have a prayer on their lips

KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar at Sri Kalahastheeswara Swamy temple in Andhra Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

With a close contest on the cards, Karnataka politicians have been seeking a bit of divine intervention days before the Election Commission set May 10 as the date for the Assembly election. While heavyweights of the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) were first off the blocks, prominent BJP leaders have not featured in such religious activities yet.

In March, former Chief Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy conducted rituals involving 100 priests for nine days at his farmhouse in Bidadi in honour of Goddess Durga. Party sources said Mr. Kumaraswamy prayed for the well-being of his family, especially JD(S) patriarch and former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, who had been hospitalised briefly. "The rituals were conducted by Mr. Kumaraswamy in Ramanagara district last month. Though it was for the well-being of the family, praying for good luck ahead of elections was also among the motives," a senior JD(S) leader told *The Hindu*.

Sources said the rituals were performed by the priests from Andhra Pradesh, with Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao offering tips to Mr. Kumaraswamy. Mr. Rao's Bharat Rashtra Samithi has extended support to the JD (S) in Karnataka and may campaign in Kalaburagi, Bidar, and some other regions that were a part of Hyderabad before Independence. Mr. Kumaraswamy had earlier attended the programme marking the renaming of Mr. Rao's party from Telangana Rashtra Samithi.

On April 2, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar offered prayers at Sri Kalahastheeswara Swamy temple near Tirupati along with his wife. He is also slated to participate in 'Rahu Ketu Puja', a ritual to ward off misfortune and bring good luck, at this temple on May 10.

Last month, he also participated in a special puja at the Adichunchanagiri Mutt in Mandya district, the most revered mutt of the Vokkaliga community that he belongs to.

Sources in the BJP told *The Hindu* that no prominent leader has conducted large-scale religious rituals recently. Former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, a key member of the party's election campaign committee helmed by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, is known for conducting such rituals in the past.

Telangana BJP chief held, to be in judicial custody till April 19

The Hindu Bureau
KARIMNAGAR

Amid high tension, BJP Telangana president and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay was arrested by the police on Wednesday in connection with the case relating to circulation of the SSC Hindi exam question paper on WhatsApp on Tuesday.

The police have named Mr. Sanjay as the first accused in the FIR and arrested him on charges of criminal conspiracy, malpractices in SSC public exams with an intention to spread rumours, disrupt the peaceful conduct of the ongoing SSC exams and defame the duly elected State government.

B. Prashanth, 33, a former reporter of a Telugu television news channel; G. Mahesh, 37, a lab assistant; M. Shiva Ganesh, 19; and a minor boy are among the 10 accused named in the FIR.

Acting on a complaint filed by M. Shiva Prasad, Headmaster of ZPHS, Kamalapur, the police on Tuesday registered a case.

Mr. Sanjay was taken into preventive custody by the police from his house in Karimnagar in the early hours of Wednesday. His arrest sparked widespread protests from the BJP cadres across the State.

Mr. Sanjay was produced before the judge of a local court at his residence in Hanamkonda on Wednesday evening. The judge remanded him in judicial custody till April 19.

HC rejects plea of 2 minor Pakistani nationals for grant of citizenship

Their parents — father, a Pakistani, and mother, an Indian — got divorced in 2014; as per Pakistani law, they cannot give up their citizenship till they complete 21 years of age, and Indian law prohibits dual citizenship

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Two minor Pakistani nationals, born to a Pakistani man and an Indian woman in Dubai, will have to wait till they complete 21 years of age to apply for Indian citizenship as the High Court of Karnataka has said that it cannot direct authorities to grant citizenship to them when the Pakistani law does not permit its citizens to give up their citizenship till they turn 21.

"When the law of Pakistan does not permit renunciation of citizenship till the age of 21, the law of India would not permit grant of citizenship till the renunciation of citizenship of another country," the court observed while pointing out that Indian law prohibits dual citizenship. Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order while rejecting a joint petition, filed by the 17-year-old girl and the 14-year-old boy, represented by their mother, Ameena, all residents of Bengaluru.

Case background

Ms. Ameena had married Assad Mallik, a Pakistani national, in Dubai in 2002 as per the Shariah law. The two children were born to them in 2004 and 2008, respectively, in Dubai. The couple got divorced in 2014 by way of mutual consent before a court in Dubai and the father relinquished his custody over the children. However, the children continued to stay in Dubai along with their mother, who was employed there.

The mother, on finding no means for subsistence in Dubai, in 2021 decided to come back to her parental house in Bengaluru and approached the Indian authorities in Dubai to bring children to India as they, being Pakistani nationals, were possessing Pakistani passports.

The Consulate General of India, Dubai, on humanitarian grounds, granted temporary passports on May 31, 2021, on the condition that it would be subject to their citizenship status after they surrendered their Pakistani passports.

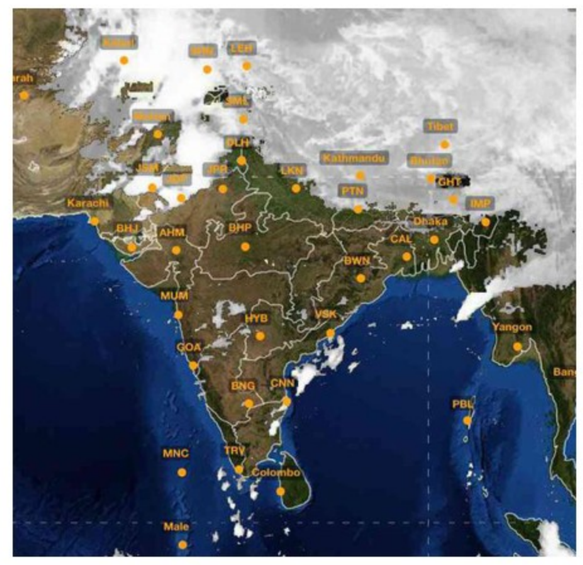
Also, the Consulate General of Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Dubai clarified to the Indian authorities that it has no objection for grant of Indian nationality to the two minor children but pointed out categorically that individuals below 21 years of age cannot apply for renunciation of citizenship under the Pakistan Citizenship Act.

MHA's stand

The mother, on coming to India, wrote to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on May 5, 2022, seeking Indian citizenship for the children and knocked on the doors of the court in July 2022, as she did not receive any response from the MHA. However, the MHA, during the pendency of the petition, in September 2022, rejected her request citing the Citizenship Act, 1955.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty wind likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, central Maharashtra, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	33.6	24.4	Kozhikode	—	35.0	25.1
Ahmedabad	—	37.5	24.5	Kurnool	—	41.5	26.7
Aizawl	20	31.5	16.2	Lucknow	—	34.5	18.5
Allahabad	—	37.8	19.2	Madurai	2	37.2	24.6
Bengaluru	—	34.8	21.7	Mangaluru	—	32.6	23.5
Bhopal	—	—	18.4	Mumbai	—	32.0	23.0
Bhubaneswar	—	37.8	22.5	Mysuru	—	35.2	21.4
Chandigarh	—	30.2	12.7	New Delhi	—	32.4	15.9
Chennai	—	34.1	27.8	Patna	—	36.3	21.4
Coimbatore	0.6	36.6	22.9	Port Blair	—	32.5	24.1
Dehradun	—	29.5	12.2	Puducherry	—	34.8	25.2
Gangtok	11	21.0	10.5	Pune	—	37.8	21.0
Goa	—	32.6	23.4	Raipur	—	37.4	24.5
Guwahati	5	29.8	17.6	Ranchi	—	32.8	22.2
Hubballi	—	39.0	23.0	Shillong	0.2	24.9	14.5
Hyderabad	—	36.2	24.7	Shimla	0.6	18.8	7.5
Imphal	5	21.2	14.8	Srinagar	3	18.0	2.7
Jaipur	—	32.7	20.8	Thiruvananthapuram	4	33.5	24.2
Kochi	—	32.2	26.2	Tiruchi	—	37.5	25.6
Kohima	4	15.9	11.0	Vijayawada	—	36.4	26.4
Kolkata	0.7	35.4	25.0	Visakhapatnam	—	31.8	27.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.10	.27	.29	...138	...126	
Bengaluru	...7	..17	.54	78	...106	
Chennai	...3	..46	.98	.....—	38	
Delhi	.15	..52	.37	...230	...193	
Hyderabad	.12	1	156	62	87	
Kolkata	.17	..16	.67	46	72	
Lucknow	.11	..37	.85	83	...120	
Mumbai	..—	121	.71	...198	...154	
Pune	..—	..43	.69	68	70	
Visakhapatnam	.18	..39	.47	34	68	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Begusarai, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 294 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 20

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Kerala High Court orders translocation of wild tusker Arikompan to Parambikulam reserve

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Wednesday ordered that the wild elephant Arikompan roaming at Santhanpara and Chinnakkanal in Idukki district be captured, radio-collared, and relocated to the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve.

The Bench comprising Justice A.K. Jayasankaran Nambiar and Justice Gopinath P. observed that the Committee of Excerpts (CoE) constituted by the court considered all the relevant aspects and came to the conclusion that the best possible way to deal with the present situation was only to capture, radio-collar, and relocate the animal to the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve.

Tusker Arikompan near Anayirankal dam in Idukki.

The court said this was the best option despite the submission of the Additional Advocate General that it was for the Chief Wildlife Warden to take the final decision as to whether the elephant had to be relocated or kept in captivity.

The court also directed the District Collectors of Idukki, Thrissur, and Ernakulam to personally supervise the relocation of the animal. The court also made it clear that during the capture, radio-collaring, and transport of the elephant, members of the public shall not be permitted to videograph or transmit any images of the elephant or its release at Parambikulam. Nor any celebration or beating of drums or bursting of crackers shall be permitted anywhere near the animal after its capture or during its transport.

Seven-year RI to 13 convicts in Attappady lynching case

The Hindu Bureau
PALAKKAD

The Special Court for SC-ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, Mannarkkad, which tried the sensational lynching case of Attappady tribal youth Madhu on Wednesday sentenced 13 persons to seven years of rigorous imprisonment (RI).

Judge K.M. Retheesh Kumar had on Tuesday convicted 14 of the 16 accused. The judge on Wednesday awarded separate sentences to them. When 13 of them were awarded seven years in prison and different amounts of fines, one was awarded three months' prison and a fine of ₹500.

Orthodox Church head meets PM, flags 'isolated problems against churches'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday met with the head of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews III in Parliament, where the latter supported development programmes run by the government and spoke of what he termed "isolated problems in different regions against Christian churches".

"I met Prime Minister as I was in New Delhi for Easter services. Prime Minister knows our church very well, as our church is in Gujarat as well. He knows about the Church's institutions like education and charity that are run across India," he said.

He added that he was supportive of "programmes the government of India is doing for development." But interestingly added that there had been some "isolated problems" in different regions against Christian churches. "Obviously there will be complaints and they will continue to be expressed. I hope there is a round table conference for finding the issues and solving them," he said.

He was accompanied by Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan during his meeting with Mr. Modi.

The meeting was described by Mr. Muraleedharan as "productive".

Outreach campaign

Interestingly, the BJP has planned a special outreach campaign aimed at wooing minorities and stepping up pressure against the Kerala government.

In line with its plan, the party will record testimonies of beneficiaries for its *Nanni Modi* (thank you, Modi) campaign.

The party has been trying to get traction in Kerala and meetings between senior party leaders and various members of the Christian community have been happening at regular intervals.

Stalin opposes lignite block auction in T.N.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Wednesday said in the Assembly that the State government and especially he, who "hailed from the delta region", would not allow any project that would affect the region's farmers.

He was responding to a special calling attention motion moved by members of all political parties on the recent Union Ministry of Coal's notification to auction 101 lignite/coal blocks in the country, including three in Tamil Nadu.

Of the three blocks, East of Sethiathope and Vadaseri fall within the regions protected under the Tamil Nadu Protected Agriculture Zone Development Act, 2020.

KOCHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
CORPORATION OFFICE, PB.No.1016
ERNAKULAM, KOCHI-682011
No. MOE2-011370/2023 Dt: 04/04/2023
REQUEST FOR QUOTATION
WINDOW NO.: C197216/2023
Design, Supply, Installation, erection and commissioning of minimum 150 TPD Bio degradable Municipal Solid Waste Processing Plant at Brahmapuram site including civil works with operations and maintenance for 5 years
Tender Fee : 15,000 + GST
EMD : 5,00,000 /-
Pre Bid Meeting : 12.04.2023, 3pm
Last Date for Online Submission : 25.04.2023, 6.55 pm
Date of Openings of Bids : 28.04.2023, 10.00 am
The bidding document is available online and bids should be submitted online at www.etenders.kerala.gov.in. For further details please visit the Website www.etenders.kerala.gov.in and search the Window Number.
Sd/- Superintending Engineer
Kochi Municipal Corporation

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Tender Call Notice E-mail: rbcirclekhurda@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle - 28/2022-23 Memo No - 578 Dt.27.03.2023
The Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Buildings work as detailed in the table below:
1. Nature of Work : Buildings Works
2. No of Work : 3 Nos
3. Tender Cost : Rs.10000.00 (On-Line)
4. Class of Contractor : A Class and B Class
5. Available of Bid document in the Website : From 10.00 AM of Dt.10.04.2023 up to 05.00 PM of Dt.20.04.2023 up to 5.00 PM
6. Date of opening of Bid : Dt 21.04.2023 at 11.30 AM
7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website:https://tenderodisha.gov.in. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.
Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha
B-22 : OIPR-34127/11/0001/2324

E_Mail : sencrwangul@yahoo.co.in; Ph. No.06764-236404
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, ANGUL
"e" Procurement Notice for PMGSY Works
No. 973 // Dt. 04.04.2023 //
e-Procurement Notice for Road Works in Odisha
1. Name of the Work : Road Works
2. Total No. of Work : 2 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : Rs.96.00 to 276.00 Lakhs
4. Class of Contractor : As per annexure..
5. Period of Completion : As per annexure..
6. Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding From	To	Last Date & Time of seeking tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul	Road Online -AGL-02/2023-24	12.04.2023 at 10.00 A.M.	27.04.2023 up to 5.00 P.M.	25.04.2023 up to 1.00 P.M.	28.04.2023 at 09.00 AM	Will be intimated separately

For detailed Notice Inviting Tenders, Please visit to the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd/- S.C.Samantaray
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul.
O-18: OIPR-25180/11/0002/2324

Youth thrashed for talking to girl from another community

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The Dakshina Kannada police have arrested four persons on the charge of assaulting a youth for talking to a girl from another community in Belthangady taluk on Tuesday.

The police said the arrested persons are Dinesh and Nitesh, both from Totattady village, Avinash from Somanthadkka village, and Sachin from Mundaje village, all in Belthangady taluk. The complainant, Mohammed Jahir, said he finished his work in a catering unit in Mangaluru and boarded a Chikkamagaluru-bound KSRTC bus. He purchased ticket to Charmadi-Kakkinje village and sat next to a Christian girl during the travel. The accused Nitesh was travelling on the same bus.

As the bus stopped near the petrol bunk, in Ujire, around 5.30 p.m., a group of people including the accused persons got into the bus. They forced Jahir alight from the bus. They showed a video clipping of him talking to the girl and assaulted him.

The arrested persons have been booked under Sections 323, 341 and 506 of the IPC.

'JSP-BJP alliance will yield good results'

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Party (JSP) president Pawan Kalyan was beaming with confidence at the end of two days of hectic consultations with the BJP's top brass, and hoped that the meetings would yield "positive results" for the JSP-BJP combine in the run-up to the general elections in 2024.

He reiterated his wish to not let the anti-YSR Congress Party votes split, for which the JSP and the BJP needed to bury their differences. He said the JSP and the BJP had talks on ways to end the YSRCP rule.

Kurnool simmers at 42° Celsius

The Hindu Bureau
KURNOOL

The heatwave in Rayalaseema district has led to Nandyal and Mantralayam, in the undivided Kurnool district, recording the highest temperature of 42° Celsius on Wednesday and above 40° at several places in Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool districts.

Fourteen places in the State recorded above 40° as the highest temperature.

ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
Regd. Office: Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022
CIN:U40102OR2004SGC007553
TENDER ALERT
1)E-Tender Notice No.CGM(Tel)-01/2022-23: Bids are invited from reputed EPC/Turnkey contractors for Supply, Erection, Testing and commissioning of equipment for data and speech communication between NINL and SLDC, Bhubaneswar through OPGW on Turnkey Contract Basis at an estimated cost of Rs.1,30,19,613/-.
Complete set of bidding documents are available on:**www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL** portal and OPTCL's official website: **www.optcl.co.in.** HIPR-01/2023-24
CAD-47 OIPR-04011/11/0002/2324

Madurai Corporation
Municipal Corporation Building, Aringar Anna Maligai, Tallakulam, Madurai - 625 002.Phone: 78716 61787
INVITATION FOR BIDS
Ref : E1 / 004595 /2022 Date: 03.04.2023
1. On behalf of **Madurai Corporation, The Commissioner** invites Tender from eligible and qualified bidders for the below mentioned work as given in the Table:

Sl. No.	Description	Tender Put Value	Bid Security (EMD)	Period of Completion	Document Availability
1	E 1 / 004595 / 22 Rejuvenation and Beautification of Vandiyur Tank in Madurai Corporation	Rs.41.16 Crore	Rs.41.16 Lakhs	Eighteen Months	06.04.2023 To 05.05.2023, 3.00pm

2. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from **The Commissioner, Madurai Corporation,** Aringnar Anna Maligai, Thallakulam, Madurai - 625 002.
3. The Bid Documents can be downloaded from the website **https://tntenders.gov.in** and Bids must be submitted by E-Submission only.
4. Bids shall be opened **05.05.2023 3.30 PM** at Aringar Anna Maligai, Madurai Corporation, in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of receipt of the bids as specified, the bids will be received and opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
5. Pre-bid meeting will be held on **13.04.2023 at 4.30 hrs** at the office of **"The Commissioner, Madurai Corporation"** at Aringar Anna Maligai.
6. All other details can be seen in the bidding document.
Commissioner
Madurai Corporation
DIPR/2025/Tender/2023
"சோதனை கடந்து சுதந்திரம் அடைந்தோம் சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம்"

The growth math

Resurging oil prices, tight money may dent consumption, investment hopes

On Tuesday, two multilateral institutions presented their regional economic outlook for this year, scaling down their projection for India's growth prospects in 2023-24. The World Bank has pared its real GDP growth forecast for the country to 6.3% from 6.6% it had estimated a few months earlier, and 7% projected in October 2022. The key domestic factors it flagged for the downgrade are: rising borrowing costs would hurt otherwise resilient consumption demand, government consumption will likely contract, while services sectors' growth will slip to a three-year low of 6.7% from an estimated 9.5% in 2022-23. The Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) noted that a rebounding China's and India's domestic demand (which it believes will likely stay healthy) would lift up Asia's growth prospects. However, it slashed its 2023-24 GDP growth forecast for India from 7.2% to 6.4%, citing tight monetary conditions and fading optimism on business conditions that it reckoned would lead to lower growth in private investments (that had only seen a fledgling post-COVID recovery till now). Apart from these domestic issues, of course, both the institutions have cited the effects of the existing challenging conditions in the global economy, which are freshly exacerbated by a spate of bank failures in the developed world and resurfacing concerns about oil prices heading north despite slowing world demand as producers cut output in unison.

To be clear, the government, which presented the Union Budget around two months after the last forecasts of these institutions, of 7%-plus growth, had not articulated such high hopes for this year. The Economic Survey pegged 2023-24 growth at 6.5%, while the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) estimates it at 6.4%. However, India's current growth estimate for last year is 7%, while the World Bank and ADB expect it to be marginally lower at 6.9% and 6.8%, respectively. A better picture on the base over which this year's growth has to be calculated, will only emerge by the end of May when first estimates for the last quarter of 2022-23 will be released. The world would also have spun a few more times by then and 2023-24 forecasts shall be revised whichever way the winds blow. At this time last April, the International Monetary Fund had just scaled down its India growth estimate for the year gone by, from 9% to 8.2%, while the World Bank, the ADB and the RBI had projected it to be 8%, 7.5% and 7.2%, respectively. Policymakers can safely tune out the noise generated by these numbers, but must pay heed to the stress signs being flagged so as to proactively minimise any impending damage.

Imagined slur

Rahul's appeal needs urgent hearing, lest it becomes dangerous precedent

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has obtained bail from a Sessions Court in Surat, pending his appeal against a bizarre conviction for defamation recorded by a judicial magistrate's court. In an unusual judgment, the trial court had given him the maximum permissible prison term of two years, claiming that a Member of Parliament deserved to be awarded the highest punishment because of his status. As a result of the two-year jail term, he has now become ineligible to remain a legislator and the Lok Sabha Secretariat has notified his disqualification. He may be able to regain his seat only if the appellate court stays his conviction, or the appeal itself is allowed and the verdict is set aside. The Sessions Court has posted the application for hearing on April 13, and asked the complainant, Purnesh Modi, a Bharatiya Janata Party Member of the Legislative Assembly, to file his reply to the plea by April 10. Mr. Gandhi's appeal focuses on both legal aspects of defamation and the factual aspects behind his remarks that referred to the surname 'Modi' figuring in a list of people who he accuses of carrying on business to the detriment of national interests. The trial court's conclusion that Mr. Gandhi had sought to make political gain by defaming 13 crore people who carry the surname 'Modi' will have to be tested against the legal position that only a definite and determinable group of people can be the object of defamation.

The relevant provision on defamation, Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code, contains an explanation that a 'collection of persons' can also be aggrieved by a defamatory remark. However, whether an amorphous group of people joined only by a surname can be such a 'collection of persons' is a relevant question. This becomes especially salient when the remarks are being construed as a slur on some backward communities. While the finding that the speech was defamatory was damaging in itself, the quantum of sentence has yielded some separate grounds for the appeal. Mr. Gandhi has contended that the judgment cites no precedent for giving the maximum punishment and that there is no discussion on the consequence of the two-year jail term. The appeal deserves to be heard and disposed of with some urgency as it may be an unacceptable precedent for legislators to be arbitrarily convicted for politically loaded remarks and awarded precisely the quantum of punishment required to get them disqualified. A flagrant example such as this may lead to a surge in the filing of multiple criminal cases in different jurisdictions by political rivals. It may also have the deleterious effect of courts being used to tailor the quantum of punishment to suit political requirements.

A long view of the South Asian drama

Ramanathan Kumar

was Special Secretary in the Research & Analysis Wing

Uncertainty, a defining characteristic of South Asian politics, looks set to increase. Beset by a multitude of political, economic and security crises, Pakistan seems to be undergoing an implosion. With successive elections throwing up a hung parliament, prospects of political stability in Nepal remain bleak. Ahead of elections in Bangladesh, an enfeebled Opposition is attempting to revert to agitation. In the tiny Maldives, a presidential contest that could tilt the balance between democracy and authoritarianism is in the offing while Sri Lanka slowly recovers from an unprecedented economic meltdown. The run-up to the 18th Lok Sabha election in India next summer will, of course, be keenly watched. Immediate preoccupations apart, can a long view offer any lessons? A paper written by that clear-eyed doyen of India's strategic affairs community, K. Subrahmanyam, is instructive. Titled "India's Relations with her Neighbours", it was presented at a seminar and published by Strategic Analysis, the flagship journal of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), in March 1987.

Unique Indian values

Situating India's relations with its neighbours squarely within the framework of the country's foundational values, Subrahmanyam began by observing that the South Asian region constituted an integrated civilisational area bound together by shared religions, languages, cultural traditions and blood ties and, in respect of the three largest countries – India, Pakistan and Bangladesh – shared historical memories as well. Yet, the values underlying the Indian state stood out in contrast to those espoused by several of its neighbours.

These values – secularism, democracy, federalism and linguistic autonomy – were not matters of choice for India. They were compulsions, if Indian unity and integrity were to be preserved. India pursued these values because they were not just imported western values but because they were absorbed and internalised during India's century-long freedom struggle. Democracy was no more an import than Islam or Christianity in India which had a long tradition of keeping its doors and windows open and absorbing influences from outside.

India had endured because of its enormous capacity to absorb, internalise, modify and transform, and yet retain its personality. In the 19th century, as democratic values emerged in western Europe, they were accepted on an eclectic basis in India. Hence, local government, free press, trade union rights, liberal democratic multiparty competitive politics, adult suffrage, secular outlook and acceptance of the state as a vehicle of development became planks in the freedom struggle. The representational system of government in India was the envy of most of the developing world as was the totally apolitical functioning of the Indian armed forces and the critical role of the Indian press.

In the polarised discourse of today, a paper by K. Subrahmanyam, India's strategic affairs veteran, titled 'India's Relations with her Neighbours', assumes greater relevance than before

India as a unity

Some of India's neighbours, supported by sections of western scholarship, questioned the very concept of Indian integrity and unity. According to them, India was never united before the British brought the whole country under a single administrative structure. What was overlooked by these sceptics was that three or four centuries ago, there were no nation states anywhere in the world; only tribes, principalities, duchies, kingdoms and empires. However, even at that stage in the world outside India, there was widespread recognition of India and Hindustan as a unity in terms of culture, civilization and even administrative structure. The British Queen, Elizabeth I, granted a charter to the East India Company. The westerners named the ocean around India as the Indian Ocean. Be it the entity '*Aah Sethu Himachalam*' (Kanyakumari to Himalayas) in the people's mind, the concept of *Sarva Bhauma* (Lord of the Earth) who had performed A*swamedha*, the epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Ashokan edicts or the mutts of Adi Sankara, the concept of India as a cultural, civilisational unity differentiated from its surroundings was several millennia old and formed the basis of our nationhood. Very few present-day nation states in the world could claim such a solid and enduring basis for their nationhood.

It is such shared historical memories that bind a people together as a nation, not language and not religion. The unity and integrity of a nation have to be based on a social contract among the people to be formulated and sustained through representative structures. Nationhood by itself is a secular political concept which has to be based on territoriality and a vision of society proposed to be built. Harking back to social mores and societal values obtaining several centuries ago and confusing them with the eternal verities of religion cannot form a firm basis for modern nation states.

This is not a problem only for Pakistan and Bangladesh. Within India too we face this problem of conflict between those who would like to build social, political and economic structures and processes on the basis of continually evolving knowledge and those who would like to freeze such evolution, arguing that societal structures and processes should be based on traditions, scriptures and belief systems formulated centuries ago. It is essentially a struggle between integration towards a universalised and internationalist society or one-world concept and fragmentation based on one group's differences with the rest arising out of an innate fear of and inability to cope with the world at large.

Keys to coexistence

From the above flowed the ultimate keys to peaceful coexistence in the subcontinent. India should grow in economic and technological terms and, as it does, its neighbours will adjust themselves to the Indian reality and stop thinking in terms of invoking China and other extra-regional powers as countervailing factors. This will be a long-term process. India should develop its military power in order to shield itself from the turbulence around it and be ready to respond to the pressures of this age of coercive diplomacy. India's diplomacy – as distinct from its aid programmes, trade and people-to-people interaction – should place less emphasis on its South Asian neighbours and focus more on its relations with China, the U.S.S.R (now Russia), the United States, the industrialised world, South East Asia, West Asia and Africa. India's neighbours, especially Pakistan, want it to play a very low key role in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. India should do exactly that and exercise extreme patience till such time as its neighbours realise how much it can help them in their nation-building and development. Reciprocity is a basic requirement for cooperation on issues such as river waters and the use of natural resources, but once the principle of reciprocity is accepted, India should go the extra mile and be generous.

Written at a time when the world was a different place, Subrahmanyam's words are both reassuring and cautionary. Amidst the polarised discourse of our times, they are more relevant than ever. Above all, they underscore the inextricable linkage between the foundational values underpinning Indian nationhood and the great power status that India legitimately aspires for.

The views expressed are personal

The takeaways from the UN World Water Conference

Anwar Sadat

is a Senior Assistant Professor in international law, specialising in environmental law, at the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi

The World Water Conference that was convened by the United Nations (March 22-24 2023) was the first UN conference on freshwater in almost 50 years. It was held in the context of serious environmental issues – flooding, drought, a severity of climate change and a looming food crisis. The conference also marked a mid-term review of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 (to advance the water agenda by energising existing programmes and projects, and inspiring water action to achieve the 2030 Agenda, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), which envisages the sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The central outcome of the conference was the international Water Action Agenda, to which governments, multilateral institutions, businesses, and non-governmental organisations submitted over 670 commitments to address water security issues. Nearly 164 governments and 75 multilateral organisations have made commitments. While the commitments embodied in the Water Action Agenda are voluntary and, therefore, legally non-binding, the voluntary commitments are expected to inspire the collective political will, which is needed to address the many water challenges.

Poor finances, poor water services

The commitments made at the conference must be scrutinised to see whether they will yield universal, safe, affordable and equitable access to water that is consistent with SDG 6. Meeting this target by 2030 (as envisioned by the SDG) will incur capital expenditures of $114 billion per year. The World Bank estimates recurring operations and maintenance for basic water and sanitation service (WASH) costs to rise from about $4 billion to over $30 billion per year by 2030, which is far more than the capital costs for basic WASH services. The World Resources Institute (WRI) is of the view that the commitments made by the states reflected rigour, scope, and ambition but they lacked proper finance and targets that are quantifiable in nature. Investment of this range would require valuing water, which in turn requires robust water measurement and accounting. There are 'serious limitations in our knowledge about the volume, flux and quality of water in lakes, rivers, soils and aquifers. There are huge gaps in water usage data. The metering of water has triggered resistance from India to Ireland because of concerns about equitable access and affordability of water services'.

It remains to be seen whether the commitments made at the conference will ensure universal, safe, affordable and equitable access to water

Funding from regional, national, and international sources prioritises new water infrastructure rather than on water maintenance services (World Bank study). It results in decreased service for water customers. World Bank estimates project recurring operations and maintenance service (WASH) costs to rise from about $4 billion to over $30 billion per year by 2030, which is far more than the capital costs for basic WASH services. Water does not qualify to be a global public goods as it is not considered to be an area of urgent funding as compared to climate change. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the only international funding mechanism that has been able to cover more than 300 watersheds and an even greater number of aquifers across the political boundaries of two or more states with its grant and concessional loan.

India at the conference

India's commitments at the conference were: an investment of $240 billion in the water sector and efforts to restore groundwater level. A 2021 CAG report says that groundwater extraction in India increased from 58% to 63% between 2004-17. This has been further exacerbated by climate change resulting in intermittent rainfall, which further undermines the recharge potential.

The revised Groundwater Bill 2017 vests State groundwater boards with creating laws, managing water allocation and other relevant issues. The State boards are understaffed, and lack in expertise and prioritising socio-political conflicts over groundwater resources.

In international law, 'states possess the authority to make voluntary commitments to address issues of global concern. These commitments are distinguished from other legal forms because they are not made pursuant to a consensus instrument to which the parties have agreed. They are generally independent of the commitments of other parties'.

Efforts to 'tackle climate change and to promote environmental sustainability have led states to make voluntary commitments to curb greenhouse gases and to take measures to promote sustainability, even in the absence of a legally non-binding instrument. The commitments of states after the Climate Conference in Denmark (December 2009), underline this. But in the case of climate change, these voluntary commitments take place within a broader context of binding agreements: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement'.

The 2023 Water Conference takes place within the context of SDG 6, and not within the context of the UN Water Convention 1997 and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Water Convention 1992, the two legally binding legal instruments on regulation of trans-boundary river water courses. But the target embodied in 6.5 of the SDG 6 focusing on 'implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM) at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate' is a common thread between the Water Conference and the two conventions.

Voluntary commitments are becoming an important feature in the environmental law vista, but they raise difficult issues of accountability. Commitments made by the states with different formats and with different content pose challenges in terms of monitoring compliance with each commitment. Voluntary commitments are perhaps just a necessary step in the face of inaction.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Moves by China

China appears to be doing things as it wills with the response from the Indian side found to be weak and meandering. This is best illustrated by the oft-repeated remark by the External Affairs Minister, that India's relations with China are not normal and will return to normal only when the LAC issue is resolved. The Government has not clearly apprised the people of this country what the positional change at the LAC is, in what way relations with China are not normal, and what India's expectation from China on the LAC issue is. Despite meetings between the Indian and Chinese leaders and other high-ranking officials, China never seems to miss an opportunity to spite India. This only shows that India has failed to judge China and we are not clear on where we stand *vis-à-vis* China today. Unless clarity emerges, China will do whatever it wants and we will only continue to "closely monitor" what China is doing.

M.D. Ravikanth,
Chennai

State of elephants

Not a day passes without some report or other on the sad plight of elephants in India. The case of a 60-year-old captive elephant, Lalitha, is a case in point. The animal was made to suffer and it is unfortunate that even after the judiciary intervened, her condition worsened. Private ownership of animals should be banned and such elephants rehabilitated.

Rahini Pugazhendhi,
Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu

Exams, disabled students

I write this letter on behalf of my sister who is aurally challenged and mute to draw the attention of the authorities concerned about examination guidelines not being followed by the authorities when it comes to deaf and dumb students enrolled for the three-year diploma under the Punjab State Board of Technical Education, Chandigarh. The Punjab State Board of Technical Education is clearly not following the stipulated guidelines. As a result, my sister had to reappear for the fourth and fifth semesters while four of her classmates had to drop out of the course. Exam practices have to be in the objective format or provision has to be made for a scribe (as stated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Department of Disabilities). Students who are handicapped are suffering. They find such hurdles to be a source of depression.

Dinesh Verma,
Patiala, Punjab

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

The obstacles against humane policing

R.K. Raghavan

is a former CBI Director who now teaches Criminal Justice and Policing at the Jindal Global University, Sonepat, in Haryana

The serious complaint of human rights violation recently against an IPS officer in Ambasamudram in south Tamil Nadu should greatly embarrass the State government and the police hierarchy. The officer has been suspended from service and his alleged misconduct is being probed. The Chief Minister must be complimented for his swift action against the offending official. This should send a strong message to the police force in the State that no illegal physical treatment of crime suspects will be tolerated and that such behaviour will be subjected to a clinical and credible enquiry by an independent authority.

The case revives memories from June 2020 when a father and son from Sathankulam in Thoothukudi district in Tamil Nadu were tortured for keeping their establishment open beyond permitted hours. The two subsequently died and the policemen concerned are on trial.

Police excesses in the U.S.

The history of policing in many countries is pockmarked by episodes of excesses. The U.S. is one country which has had far too many instances of police torture. The Rodney King incident of 1991 in Los Angeles is a watershed in policing. In this incident, the police stopped an African-American motorist to check his credentials. Upon resisting, he was severely beaten up by a group of uniformed patrolmen. The assault was caught on camera and circulated, leading to widespread outrage and disturbance of public peace. The incident acquired racist overtones and added credibility to the long-standing, strident charge that the American police – dominated by the White male – was always looking for African-American targets.

The more recent death (May 25, 2020) of 46-year-old George Floyd, again an African-American, in Minneapolis following gory physical torture in public view is another instance that has shocked the average American. In this case, the victim, accused of having failed to pay for what he bought at a convenience store, was pushed to the ground and held by his neck until he suffocated to death. This led to vandalism by the African-American community not only in Minnesota but in the northeast of the country as well.

In contrast, police handling of the public is more civilised in most of Europe, including the U.K.

Against the known instances of police brutality across the globe, we can safely assume that a large number of cases of torture have also gone unreported. This largely constitutes assaults on women. Only about 10% of complaints are believed to have been registered. Also, only a small percentage of the offenders have been convicted.

Expectations for the future

Many citizens ask me as to whether we can expect more humane and civilised police conduct in India in the years to come. I offer no guarantee that police brutality will vanish in the near future. This is largely due to corruption among public servants which has burgeoned in recent times. If there is no public outrage against corruption it is because the personal costs involved for crusaders are increasing by the day. In the same manner, police excesses will continue to rise because the stress that an average policeman is subjected to from his higher-ups has not abated. The pressure to produce results has been on the rise. Our country has large police forces. To disseminate the message of ethics to the bottom of such large outfits is a gargantuan task.

There is huge criticism of the Indian Police Service (IPS) which was created immediately after the Independence with great expectations. But these have been only partially fulfilled. However, the IPS has done remarkably well in introducing science and technology. There are now many officers in the IPS who have graduated from IITs and IIMs before being appointed. They have done a lot to make those in the lower echelons understand the value of technology in policing. This is good so far as it goes. But these achievements have done little to spread the message that technology and ethics should go hand in hand.

Entrenched philosophy

It is sad and equally true that many in the political firmament subscribe to the philosophy that without physical force on misbehaving citizens, the quality of policing cannot improve and law and order cannot be maintained. Taking a cue from some 'tough' Chief Ministers the police leadership has succumbed to the lure of human rights transgressions. They have unabashedly preached the use of third-degree and extra-legal methods to the problem of solving crime. The consequence is incidents like Ambasamudram and Sattankulam.

In the former case, the officer involved hails from outside Tamil Nadu and no personal grudge could be attributed to him. In all probability, this was a case of overzealousness gone astray.

The question that is often asked of me is whether solid training in ethics at the time of induction could smoothen the rough edges of a recruit. This applies equally to everyone from a highly placed IPS officer to a constable at the grassroots. It is preposterous to believe that inputs in ethics during training will last long. The pressures in the field are so enormous that the impact of ethics evaporates quickly.

It is here that the DGPs and IGPs have a crucial role in indoctrinating young recruits on the value of sticking to the law and civilised behaviour. If these leaders themselves are votaries of lawless policing, only the Almighty can save the law-abiding citizens from an unprincipled police force.

Many in the political firmament believe that law and order cannot be maintained without the use of physical force

The fight over Savarkar's legacy

Political parties are at each other's throats yet again after a remark by Rahul

STATE OF PLAY

Abhinay Deshpande
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The controversy surrounding the legacy of Hindutva demagogue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, one of the most divisive figures in Indian politics, has reignited a heated debate in Maharashtra. The latest round of controversy was yet again sparked by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on March 25, a day after his disqualification as a Lok Sabha member, when he said: "My name is not Savarkar. My name is Gandhi. And Gandhis don't apologise."

The remark triggered a political firestorm in the State with the ruling Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party combine trying to exploit the issue to offset criticisms over the former's disqualification. The alliance launched a five-day 'Savarkar Gaurav Yatra' to push the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) to the edge. The MVA is a coalition of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde also questioned Uddhav Thackeray's stance on the Savarkar issue and his party's commitment to the Hindutva, daring him to walk out of the MVA.

While the ruling party was quick to latch on to the issue, the Savarkar controversy has become a sore spot in the relationship between the Uddhav faction of the Shiv Sena and the Congress.

Mr. Gandhi has often accused Savarkar of "apologising" to the British to get out of the Cellular jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

During his rally at Malegaon, Mr. Thackeray sharply upbraided Mr. Gandhi over his remarks on Savarkar, asserting that his party regarded Savarkar as "a deity". "While we have come together in this fight [against the BJP] to save the Constitution and democracy, Savarkar is our deity and we will not tolerate any insult to him," Mr. Thackeray said.

His party's decision to skip the Opposition meeting hosted by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, and the absence of Maharashtra Congress unit chief Nana Patole during the MVA rally at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (formerly Aurangabad) on Sunday, underscore the rift within allies.

On the same day, the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance launched the Savarkar Gaurav Yatra.

Pawar to the rescue

Slamming Congress leaders, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that the Congress party, except for Feroze Gandhi (the grandfather of Rahul Gandhi), had opposed a congratulatory motion moved for Savarkar post-Independence in Parliament by a member from West Bengal.

In an attempt to defuse tension, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar tried to broker peace between the Congress and the Uddhav faction of the Shiv Sena and advised them to concentrate on the main goal – fighting the BJP at both State and national levels.

Mr. Pawar tried to find a middle ground while promoting his own pro-Savarkar stance. He advised the Congress leaders that the Savarkar issue should not be raked up unnecessarily as any adverse comments on the freedom fighter do not augur well for the alliance. "During the meeting, Mr. Pawar reminded the Congress leaders how sensitive the Savakar issue is, and strictly asked them to refrain from remarks that would antagonise one another and people of Maharashtra at large," a senior leader who attended the meeting at Mr. Kharge's residence said.

Even the Maharashtra Congress is worried about the repercussions of Mr. Gandhi's remarks. "At ground level, we are facing the consequences of his comments. People of Maharashtra worship Savarkar, we have already made it very clear to Mr. Gandhi," a senior Congress leader said.

The Opposition questioned the BJP for remaining silent when former Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari made controversial remarks on Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and B.R. Ambedkar. "Why were they silent? It is all about diverting attention. Now, the BJP wants to divert the attention of people from Adani issue, unemployment and inflation," he said.

Meanwhile, NCP leader Ajit Pawar has taken a different stance from the Congress and asked the BJP to confer the Bharat Ratna to Savarkar. He asked why the BJP hasn't conferred the Bharat Ratna to the controversial leader.

Ultimately, the Savarkar issue has permeated into all corners of political beliefs in the State, burning the cauldron of divisive politics by further widening the chasm between political parties and leaders, leaving a road to nowhere.

Close to half cases in HCs pending for over five years

The pendency of cases in courts is a demand and supply problem, with fresh cases increasing and number of judges stagnating

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

As on January 2, 2023, close to half the cases in Indian High Courts were pending for over five years. In the Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh) and Calcutta (West Bengal and A&N Islands) High Courts, over 63% of cases were pending for over five years. Whereas High Courts in northeastern India including Tripura, Sikkim and Meghalaya had less than 10% cases pending for over five years, according to the recently released India Justice Report 2022.

The pendency of cases in courts is a demand and supply problem. The number of cases filed in courts is increasing each year while the number of judges presiding over those cases are either stagnant or not increasing in tandem with the rise in cases.

The total number of active cases in various High Courts increased from over 41 lakh in 2014 to 53 lakh in 2022. However, as of December 2022, there were unfilled judge positions in High Courts throughout all major States. From a minimum of 16% vacancy for High Court judges in Jharkhand to a maximum of 48% vacancy in Rajasthan, the availability of judges was inadequate. In Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan more than 40% of High Court judge positions were vacant as of December 2022. Overall judicial vacancy in Indian High Courts stood at 29.8% and High Court staff vacancies were at 25.6%.

This demand-supply imbalance meant the case clearance rate of High Courts suffered. The case clearance rate is the number of cases disposed of in a year, measured against the number of cases filed in that year. If courts resolve fewer than 100 out of every 100 cases they receive, the deficit contributes to the backlog, which in turn increases their pending caseload.

Chart 1 shows the case clearance rate for High Courts in different States for the past five years. For instance, in India, of every 100 cases filed in 2022, only 95 cases were cleared that year, a clearance rate of 95%, with 5% getting added as a backlog. The rate was poorer during the pandemic years: 83% in 2021 and 77% in 2020.

In 2022, the Rajasthan High Court's clearance rate was only 65%, the only High Court with a rate below 70% last year. Among major States, the Madras High Court stood out as the only Court that had a clearance rate of over 90% even during pandemic years, which improved to 107% in 2022.

Chart 2 compares the average case clearance rate (%) in the past five years – vertical axis – against the judge vacancy in high courts (%) as of December 2022 – horizontal axis. As can be observed from the chart, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh with more than 40% judge vacancy, had clearance rates of about 80% or lower.

In Tripura and Manipur, though there was relatively high vacancy (>40%), the clearance rate was over 100%, most probably because supply of fresh cases was lower.

There are courts where the vacancy was relatively lower but clearance rate was poor. Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu had similar vacancy positions but vast difference in clearance rates. This again could be because of the difference in the volume of incoming cases.

So while vacancies of judges should be filled quickly, alternate dispute resolution mechanisms should also be pursued to reduce the burden of courts.

Chart 3 shows the average number of cases pending per High Court judge in 2017 and 2022. In Rajasthan, due to very high vacancy and a poor clearance rate, each High Court judge had around 24,000 cases pending by 2022, a huge jump from just over just 7,000 pending cases each in 2017.

A lot on the plate

The charts are from the India Justice Report 2022 which ranks States based on policing, judiciary, prisons and legal aid. The story also quotes data from MPs' answers in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha

Chart 1 : Case clearance rate for High Courts in different States for the past five years. Figures are in %

State	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Andhra Pradesh (AP)	69	54	74	69	73
Arunachal Pradesh	142	83	79	84	90
Assam	142	83	79	84	90
Bihar (BR)	90	86	88	57	113
Chhattisgarh (CH)	90	87	78	86	77
Delhi	91	87	66	73	88
Goa	87	83	69	69	72
Gujarat (GJ)	75	82	75	82	92
Haryana (HR)	85	87	73	73	103
Himachal Pradesh	83	61	53	79	80
Jharkhand (JH)	102	110	88	100	101
Karnataka (KA)	75	94	89	107	82
Kerala (KL)	85	94	76	107	156
Madhya Pradesh (MP)	82	81	75	80	84
Maharashtra (MH)	87	83	69	69	72
Manipur	132	130	66	83	99
Meghalaya	90	100	69	90	128
Mizoram	142	83	79	84	90
Nagaland	142	83	79	84	90
Odisha (OR)	101	114	73	82	131
Punjab (PB)	85	87	73	73	103
Rajasthan (RJ)	82	86	59	71	65
Sikkim	78	111	96	138	111
Tamil Nadu (TN)	106	99	93	98	107
Telangana (TS)	69	64	58	70	103
Tripura	92	113	111	127	107
Uttar Pradesh (UP)	91	94	72	82	96
Uttarakhand (UT)	83	93	88	83	81
West Bengal (WB)	85	110	83	111	121
All India	**88**	**108**	**77**	**83**	**95**

Chart 2 : Case clearance rate (%) in past five years against the judge vacancy in high courts (%) as of December 2022

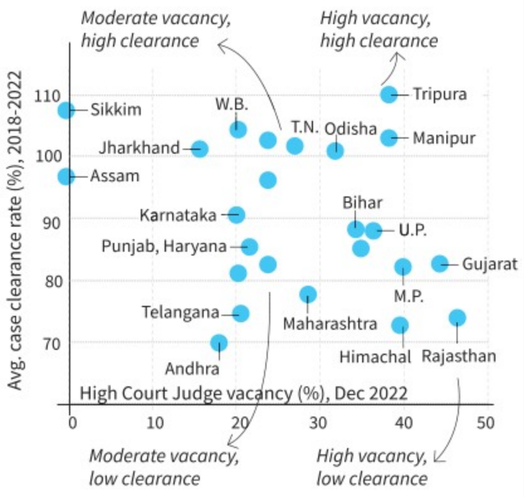
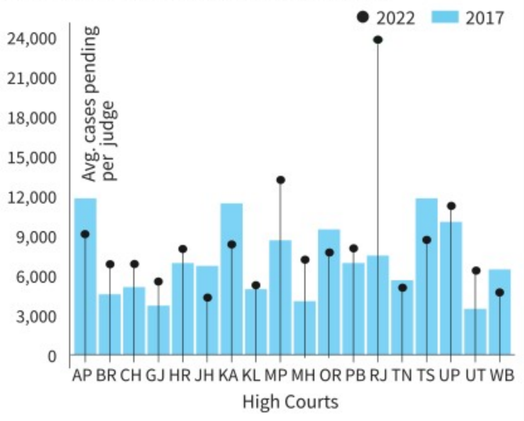


Chart 3: The chart shows the average number of cases pending per High Court judge in 2017 and 2022



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 6, 1973

Sikkim seeks military aid from India

Gangtok, April 5: Troubled Sikkim to-day sought India's military assistance and most probably the Army will move in to-morrow to take control of some police stations in the Himalayan State, it was learnt here to-night.

The request for Army help came from the Chogyal who in a letter to the Indian Political Officer here, Mr. K. S. Bajpal to-day spoke of a threat to law and order.

He sought the co-operation of the Government of India in the interest of "public security".

Reports received here to-day said police outposts in many places had been taken over by volunteers of the Sikkim National Congress and the Sikkim Janata Congress who have launched an agitation for political and administrative reforms.

Reports received here said that the Sikkim Durbar administration had completely collapsed throughout the State excepting the now deserted palace and the Gangtok bazar areas

In the districts, police outposts and administrative offices had either been deserted by officials or taken over by demonstrators.

Reports reaching here said the volunteers of the Janata Congress, which is spearheading the agitation for electoral reforms and the release of its President, Mr. K.C. Pradhan were virtually in control of eight police stations, including Rangpur, Rhenok and Rangali.

Police authorities from these towns have sought reinforcements to suppress the agitation.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 6, 1923

Indian situation

London, April 5: Presiding over the meeting of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, Sir Montagu Turner, referring to India's financial position, said that the budget deficits were due to abnormal demands and abnormal conditions. India was a country of immense resources and wonderful recuperative powers and, provided retrenchments as suggested by the Inchcape Committee were effected, provided political agitators were reasonably restrained and provided normal conditions prevailed in Europe and America, he could see no reason when India should be ere long in a very satisfactory financial position.

From Page One

'Critical views on govt. not anti-establishment'

Though recognising the top court's power to "secure confidential material in a sealed cover" under Rule 7 of the Supreme Court Rules of 2013, the CJI noted that the state's frequent reliance on sealed covers to validate its actions in courts had reduced constitutional rights and procedural guarantees of a fair hearing under the law to a "dry parchment".

The Supreme Court then evolved the "less restrictive" public interest immunity (PII) claims proceedings as an "alternative" to the sealed cover proceedings while dealing with state requests for confidentiality.

Under the alternative PII proceedings, the court would test the relevance of the material the state desires to be kept confidential in 'public interest'. The court would appoint an *amicus curiae* in order to "balance the concerns of confidentiality with the need to preserve public confidence in the objectivity of the justice delivery system".

Though the PII proceedings would be a "closed sitting", a reasoned order, allowing or dismissing the PII claim of the state, should be pronounced in open court. Even if the PII claim is successful, the court could opt to redact confidential portions of the document or provide both parties with a summary of the contents of the documents.

"While PII claims proceedings conceivably impacts the principles of natural justice, sealed cover proceedings infringe the principles of natural justice and open justice," Chief Justice Chandrachud said.

Intelligence reports' impact

The Chief Justice questioned the government's view that it could investigate or collect intelligence on citizens and later claim blanket immunity from disclosure in court.

"Intelligence agencies' reports impact the life, liberty and profession of individuals and entities, and to give such reports absolute immunity from disclosure is antithetical to a transparent and accountable system... The argument that intelligence reports may contain confidential information is one thing, but to argue that all such reports are confidential is another. Such an argument is misplaced and cannot be accepted on the touchstone of constitutional values," Chief Justice Chandrachud observed.

Chief Justice Chandrachud said that the court's own scrutiny of the government records found that the ban was based on inferences made in an Intelligence Bureau (IB) report that MBL had alleged links with Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI-H), an organisation which was last cleared of terror links in 1994 by the top court itself, and the media house's alleged "anti-establishment stance" for airing critical views about the UAPA, Armed Forces Special Powers Act, Citizenship Amendment Act, National Register of Citizens, the state's soft attitude to Hindus involved in the destruction of Babri Masjid and the "portrayal of security forces and judiciary in bad light".

"There was nothing secretive to attract the ground of confidentiality... The allegation of terror links against MBL was fallacious... The denial of security clearance by the Broadcasting Ministry to Media One channel was unreasoned," the top court said, ordering the government to renew telecast permission to the channel within 4 weeks.

Agency buys spyware from 'Pegasus rival'

No other imports of any kind have been logged in customs data by the SID in the last few years. One product from the firm was brought in as recently as January this year. On the trade data, sources said the equipment was cards for communication equipment in use, and was not related to encrypted equipment.

Cognyte did not respond to queries on the imports sent by *The Hindu*. A recent article by the *Financial Times* reported that the Indian government was seeking bids from spyware that rivals the NSO Group's Pegasus spyware, and that Cognyte was one of the firms that the government was reportedly considering.

The Pegasus spyware was reportedly used on Indian activists, journalists, and politicians, among others, according to reporting from the Forbidden Stories consortium of journalists. The Indian government has not categorically denied or admitted to buying the spyware; the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) reported that it was able to review trade data confirming that the Intelligence Bureau (IB) imported gear from the NSO Group in 2017. *The Hindu* was able to separately confirm these imports as well.

Main suspect in Kerala train fire case arrested

The police said Mr. Saifi suffered burns in the incident and also sustained injuries to his forehead after falling from a train near Khed in the Ratnagiri area while attempting to escape to Ajmer.

The accused was handed over to a Special Investigation Team of the Kerala Police and will be brought to Kannur on Thursday.

Police sources alleged that Mr. Saifi confessed to the crime but claimed that he had acted on the instructions of someone else. The Central agencies are in the process of checking his background to determine if he was self-indoctrinated or had any association with any outfits.

Political leaders cannot claim higher immunity: SC

After court tells them that they were on the same footing as ordinary citizens, 14 Opposition parties withdrew their petition seeking stringent procedure for arresting political leaders

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

> A political leader is basically a citizen. As citizens, we are all amenable to the same law. Political leaders do not enjoy an immunity
>
> **D.Y. CHANDRACHUD**
> Chief Justice of India

The Supreme Court on Wednesday told a united Opposition of 14 national parties that political leaders stand absolutely on the same footing as any ordinary citizen of India and are not entitled to "higher immunity" from investigation, arrest or prosecution.

The parties withdrew their joint petition claiming that the Centre was arbitrarily using agencies such as the ED and the CBI to arrest and institute criminal proceedings against Opposition leaders who expressed their fundamental right to dissent or disagree with the Narendra Modi-led government.

The parties had suggested a "triple test" to be followed before ordering arrest and remand of political leaders. These included factors such as whether a person was a flight risk or whether there was a reasonable apprehension of tampering with evidence or of the influencing or intimidation of witnesses. They also proposed that alternatives such as interrogation at fixed hours or, at most, house arrest be used to meet the demands of investigation. The petition said that courts should follow the principle of "bail as rule, jail as exception", especially in cases involving "non-violent offences".

"A political leader is basically a citizen. As citizens, we are all amenable to the same law. Political leaders do not enjoy an immunity," Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud observed.

'Opposition targeted'

The petitioners' advocate Abhishek Singhvi said that the petition represented a united front comprising 42% of the political spectrum, including 14 parties, together representing 45.19% of the votes cast in the previous Assembly elections. Mr. Singhvi said that, in the decade between 2004 and 2014, nearly 60% of the political leaders investigated by the CBI, were from the Opposition of the time. Now, this same figure has risen to over 95%.

Reacting to the day's development, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said some of the Opposition parties had indulged in corruption and attempted to come together on one platform, but their reality was "exposed" in court.

The Minister said that after the investigations were launched into the acts of corruption, some Opposition parties would stage protests and stall Parliament proceedings.

He added that it was the investigating agencies' right to conduct a probe against those facing corruption charge.

(With inputs from Devesh K. Pandey)

Two terror accused who fled from police arrested in Kashmir

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

They have been accused of being involved in a bomb blast inside a wine shop in Baramulla in 2022, police say

Two alleged Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants, who managed to escape from police custody in north Baramulla district of Kashmir on Wednesday morning, were arrested late in the evening. Meanwhile, a hideout was busted in Ramban district.

Official sources identified the accused as Maroof Nazir Soleh and Shahid Showkat Bala. Preliminary reports suggested they escaped during *sehri*, predawn meals organised for Muslims during the month of Ramzan, by taking advantage of the darkness.

A major search operation was launched to nab the militants, officials said. "Both the militants who had fled from police custody were arrested in the Chakloo area. They were arrested within 15 hours," the police said.

The militants are accused of being involved in a bomb blast inside a wine shop in Baramulla in 2022.

Weapons recovered

Meanwhile, security forces busted a hideout and recovered arms in the Ramban district. The recoveries include 256 7.62-mm cartridges, 36 7.62-mm empty cartridges, five AK-47 magazines, 34 9-mm cartridges, two Pika ammunition, one Pika belt, one 52-mm mortar, four detonators, two-ft Cordex, one knife, one kerosene lamp, one tape recorder, one Walkman with headphone, five audio-cassettes, one watch, two old bags, one LMG ammunition belt box and two identity cards.

HC orders deployment of Central forces in West Bengal

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday directed the West Bengal government to make a request for deployment of paramilitary forces ahead of the Hanuman Jayanti celebrations on Thursday.

Considering the sensitivity of the problem, the court also directed that "no person either a political personality or a leader or a common man shall make any statement in public or to the media concerning the festival to be celebrated tomorrow".

Observing that "prevention is better than cure" the Division Bench also added that the State police are required to take all steps to prevent any untoward incidents.

Nitish says violence on Ram Navami was a 'conspiracy' by BJP, AIMIM

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Days after communal tensions and violence broke out in Nalanda and Sasaram towns of Bihar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said on Wednesday that the "truth behind the violence" would come out soon, alleging a "conspiracy" behind the riots.

"It was all a planned, well-thought-out conspiracy and the truth behind violence will come out soon," he told presspersons on the sidelines of a function in Patna. "You all know nothing gets published in national media on what we say or do... all being controlled by them [BJP]. Now there is peace all around there."

One person was killed in Nalanda in the violence that followed the Ram Navami processions on March 25.

Pointing a finger: Nitish Kumar talking to presspersons on the sidelines of a function in Patna on Wednesday. ANI

"There was no administrative laxity. Those behind the communal tensions and violence will be known soon... Door-to-door searches are on by the district administration. It was all done by the one who is ruling [at the Centre] and their agent (AIMIM)," Mr. Kumar said.

He alleged that the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), led by Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi, was working for the BJP as "an agent". Don't you see whatever we [Opposition parties] say does not get published in national newspapers, but how much coverage they [AIMIM] get?"

Asked about Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remark during his recent visit to Bihar that the "doors of the BJP have been shut forever for Nitish Kumar", Mr. Kumar asked, "Do they have any doors?"

Meanwhile, BJP legislators created pandemonium in the Assembly on Wednesday over the violence. If the State government has any guts, let the Sasaram and Nalanda violence be probed by Central Bureau of Investigation or the National Investigation Agency, BJP MLAs Vijay Kumar Sinha and Jibesh Mishra said.

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav also said that the communal violence was a "planned conspiracy" to fuel riots.

Centre asks States to keep the peace during festival

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Hanuman Jayanti festival on Thursday, the Union Home Ministry on Wednesday asked the States to ensure law and order and monitor factors "that could disturb communal harmony in society".

The advisory comes in the wake of a series of incidents of communal violence reported on the occasion of Ram Navami from March 30 to April 1 in Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand.

"The governments are encouraged to ensure the maintenance of law and order, and monitoring of any factors that could disturb communal harmony in society," said the Ministry.

Cong. seeks all-party meeting on border issue with China

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

There is an opacity about what is happening, says senior Congress leader Manish Tiwari

The Congress on Wednesday demanded an all-party meeting on the issue of China, and asked why the Narendra Modi government was refusing to discuss the issue of national security and sovereignty in Parliament, the supreme law making body.

Addressing a press conference at the All India Congress Committee headquarters, senior leader and Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari said it had been three years since the standoff with China began at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in May 2020 but the government was maintaining a silence on the issue.

"We demand as a responsible Opposition that an all-party meeting of all leaders discuss the China situation. Three years after the stand-off, the government should have taken the entire Opposition into confidence and tell them about the developments of the last three years" he told presspersons.

Mr. Tewari said he himself had asked 55 questions in Parliament on the conflict at the border since September 2020 when Parliament met after the first conflict, but the same had not even been accepted.

"The government is not ready to answer any question on China and is not giving any answers. There is an opacity about what is happening at the border," he said.

To a question on China renaming several places in Arunachal Pradesh, he said it was very irresponsible on the part of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to say that such things kept happening in the past.

He said the last time China did something like this, the then UPA government lodged a strong protest and "we expected the government to issue a sharp statement as the action raises questions on India's integrity".

Russian envoy praises India's 'deeper understanding' of the Ukraine crisis at trade meet

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

India has a "deeper understanding" of the Ukraine crisis, Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov said on Wednesday.

Addressing the India-Russia Business Forum and B2B Meeting in New Delhi, Mr. Alipov highlighted the emerging areas of cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting, organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) was attended by a large business delegation from Russia led by Sergey Katyrin, president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation (RF-CCI).

"The Indian government also has a much deeper understanding of the circumstances. You may recall when External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar... spoke last year about attempts to make Europe's problems into global problems. In the absence of the massive and historically unprecedented Western sanction on Russia, there wouldn't have been any disruption of the global supply chains," Mr. Alipov said at the event.

Denis Alipov

The meeting discussed multiple issues including the requirement for manpower in various sectors of the Russian economy which is reorienting itself towards the major markets in the developing world in the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis.

Various aspects of India-Russia business cooperation are in focus during the ongoing visit by the RF-CCI delegation, which is on a "multi-sectoral business mission" to India from April 3 to 7.

The business mission is aimed at intensifying India's links with small- and medium-scale enterprises in Russia. The visiting delegation said that India has partnered with major Russian entities like Gazprom, but smaller Russian companies often require support to enter the Indian market.

A statement from the RF-CCI said that the business mission included the inauguration of the headquarters of the honorary representative of the Chamber in India.

In an interview with the Russian news channel *Sputnik*, Mr. Katyrin highlighted the "ruble-rupee trade settlement mechanism" as a way to get around the Western sanctions.

"I think this is a solution to a number of problems because it has become quite complicated to trade in U.S. dollars and euros. That's exactly why the Ruble-Rupee trade settlement mechanism presents an optimal opportunity. We would be able to carry out our trade with each other in an active manner," Mr. Katyrin told *Sputnik*.

Right-wing activist booked for hate speech

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

Following communal riots in Una town in coastal Saurashtra of Gujarat after Ram Navami, the local police have booked a self-proclaimed "nationalist" and right-wing activist Kajal Hindusthani, who had delivered a hate speech in the presence of local BJP legislator K.C. Rathod.

In her alleged hate speech, she targeted a minority community and the police have booked her for hate speech and incitement.

Voice against minorities

The self-proclaimed nationalist and activist is known for her fiery speeches against the minorities and she regularly attends events organised by the VHP and other right-wing outfits in and out of the State.

She commands a huge following in her social media handles including micro blogging Twitter where she is followed by the Prime Minister and others and has over 90,000 followers.

BJP to launch re-election campaign on foundation day of party

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP will be launching its campaign for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election bid in the 2024 Lok Sabha election from Thursday, the party's foundation day.

The campaign will be kicked off with wall writing at 10.72 lakh spaces, with slogans. Mr. Modi will address party leaders and workers virtually.

BJP general secretary Tarun Chugh announced the programme. The party's foundation day is on April 6, when in 1980, the erstwhile Jan Sangh, which had become a part of the Janata Party post Emergency, broke away and established the BJP.

"Party members will write slogans *Ek Baar Phir Se Modi Sarkar* (Modi government once again) and *Ek Baar Phir Se Bhajpa Sarkar*' (BJP government once again) on walls in over 10.72 lakh places after BJP national president J.P. Nadda launches the exercise from Delhi at noon on Thursday," Mr. Chugh said.

Social Justice Week

He also briefed presspersons on the details of the "Social Justice Week", which the party will observe from its foundation day to the birth anniversary of B.R Ambedkar on April 14. The BJP will hold nationwide programmes to commemorate Ambedkar. Party members would also mark the birth anniversary of social reformer Jyotiba Phule on April 11, Mr. Chugh said.

Hailing Mr. Modi for his government's work for the poor and the country's development, he said the Prime Minister's address would be broadcast live at over 10 lakh places.

At Delhi rally, workers and farmers join hands against Centre's policies

Organisers say one lakh participants had come to voice their demand for an end to ongoing assault on their livelihood; they sought policies that allow access to education, healthcare and a dignified life for them and their children

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Farmers and labourers during a Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally in New Delhi on Wednesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Nearly one lakh workers, farmers and agricultural workers, under the banner of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), and the All India Agricultural Workers' Union (AIAWU), held a protest march here at the Ramlila Ground.

They demanded minimum wages of ₹26,000 a month, pension of ₹10,000 to all workers, and legally guaranteed minimum support price based on the Swaminathan Committee recommendation for all farm produce with guaranteed procurement.

They also urged the Centre to waive all farm loans of poor and middle class peasants and agricultural workers.

Scrapping the four Labour Codes and Electricity Amendment Bill was also in the demand charter.

Addressing the crowd, AIKS president Ashok Dhawale compared the Narendra Modi government to the colonial regime. "Lakhs of Indians have died due to lack of oxygen and medical beds during the pandemic. Lakhs of farmers committed suicide. If this 'Modani' government cannot be mended, it has to be ended and it will be ended in 2024," he said, a spin-off of Mahatma Gandhi's statement against the British after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

The organisers said participants had come to voice their demand for an end to the ongoing assault on their means of livelihood and for policies that allow access to education, healthcare and a dignified life for them and their children.

Grave economic crisis

"The united action of workers and peasants expressed anger against the BJP government for destroying the wealth of the nation and determined protest against the hate campaigns to distract attention from the grave economic crisis engulfing the lives of the working people," the three organisations said in a joint statement.

One of the organisers of the rally, economist Prabhat Patnaik, told *The Hindu* that many of the big peasants are in the farmers' movement now. "All these distinctions between small and rich peasants become secondary when farmers are faced with monopolies. Compared to Adanis, who is a big peasant? They are just peanuts. Everybody is small compared to gigantic monopolies and they are gobbling up the agriculture sector," Professor Patnaik said.

He said that what had been happening during the neoliberal period was primitive accumulation of capital. He added that the economy was in a crisis, and "nobody has any idea how to get out of it".

The leaders warned the Centre that the rally was an indication of the surging anger of the working people of the country against the disregard of their basic needs while showering benefits on the big corporates.

Muslim leaders meet Shah, call for action to curtail growing incidents of violence

Ziya Us Salam
NEW DELHI

Amit Shah

A delegation of Muslim leaders led by Mahmood Madani, president, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind. met Union Home Minister Amit Shah at his residence on Tuesday night.

In a wide-ranging interaction, the Muslim leaders drew the Home Minister's attention to growing incidents of violence against the minorities, in particular the riots during the Ram Navami celebrations, frequent cases of mob lynching and cancellation of reservation for Muslims in Karnataka.

They expressed their apprehensions about the demand for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and attacks on madrasas by some BJP leaders. The Muslim leadership sought strict action against the lynching accused and possibly a new law to tackle the menace. The Minister, however, denied the need for a new law, stating, "Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code entails death. Nothing more is required".

Action assured

When told that the police often are not ready to charge the accused under Section 302, Mr. Shah "assured action within three days if a specific case was brought up", as Jamiat's senior leader Niyaz Farooqui, who was a member of the delegation, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Shah was forthright when talking of cancellation of reservation for Muslims in Karnataka. "We do not grant reservation on the basis of religion. That is our policy. However, we give reservation on the basis of backwardness."

He also urged the Muslim delegates not to see the annulment of Article 370 in Kashmir from a religious perspective. "Article 370 is not a religious issue. It concerns Centre-State relations. If there is a case of Muslims suffering since [370 was diluted], we are ready to look into it," Mr. Shah told the delegates who sought his intervention into ongoing attacks on madrasas in different parts of the country.

Assuring action, he told the Muslim community to give holistic education in madrasas. "Teach the Koran and Hadith but modern education is necessary," he stated. The Minister, however, remained tight-lipped when they raised the issue of withdrawal of Maulana Azad scholarship and UCC.

The delegation, which included All India Muslim Personal Law Board members Kamal Faruqui and Professor Akhtarul Wasey, said the leaders saw "a different Shah from the one we see delivering political speeches". "This is the first time a relationship has been established with the government. The process of dialogue has been initiated. How successful it will be remains to be seen, but it is a positive first step," Mr. Farooqui summed up.

Dhankhar rejects Kharge's move against Goyal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected on Wednesday a point of order raised by Opposition leader Mallikarjun Kharge against Union Minister and Leader of the House Piyush Goyal for his speech in the House targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

After verifying the documentary evidence submitted by Mr. Goyal, the Chairman said the BJP leader's demand of apology on the "overseas statements made by a senior leader of Opposition" was "factually premised" and did not graduate to making "allegation of a defamatory or incriminatory nature". The Opposition has questioned the ruling.

As soon as the House met at 2 p.m. after lunch, Congress members urged Mr. Dhankhar to allow Mr. Kharge to speak. Amid sloganeering by BJP members demanding an apology from Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Kharge alleged that the Centre was not allowing the Opposition to speak. He demanded that a Joint Parliamentary Committee must probe the Adani issue. Retorting to this, Mr. Goyal said the Opposition was raising baseless issues.

'There can be no issue or individual beyond the purview of discussion in the Rajya Sabha'

Later, Mr. Dhankhar read out his ruling on the notice of point of order given by Mr. Kharge on March 13 that there could be no discussion/reflections in the Rajya Sabha on or about a Member of the Lok Sabha.

'Disparaging remarks'

"While the Leader of the House Piyush Goyal did not name anyone, he severely impeached what he termed the overseas disparaging remarks by a senior leader of the Opposition tainting and tarnishing our Parliament," the ruling said. "Constitutional 'privilege' of 'freedom of expression' and 'immunity' from any civil or criminal action to Members of Parliament, calls for a high degree of care, caution and accountability," it added.

Mr. Dhankhar said: "After bestowing earnest consideration on this momentous aspect, I am of the firm view that there can be no issue or individual beyond the purview of discussion in the Rajya Sabha and the same is exclusively subject to regulation by the House and the Chairman. The two precedents relied upon by the Leader of the Opposition have no bearing on the issue being determined herein."

The Rajya Sabha functioned for four minutes in the pre-lunch session.

Earlier in the day, at the joint Opposition meeting, it was decided that a delegation will meet President Droupadi Murmu. The Opposition parties will also take out a flag march from Parliament till Vijay Chowk on Thursday, the last day of Budget Session of Parliament.

Govt. introduces Aquaculture Bill amid din in Lok Sabha

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Deadlock continues: Opposition members displaying placards in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session, on Wednesday. PTI

Members of the Opposition disrupted the Lok Sabha on Wednesday yet again over demands for a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani issue. Amid the din, the government introduced the Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

The Bill, which was introduced by Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Parshottam Rupala, seeks to decriminalise certain offences listed under the earlier 2005 Act for promoting ease of doing business.

It is also aimed at fine-tuning the operational procedures of the Coastal Aquaculture Authority and promoting newer forms of environment-friendly coastal aquaculture, which have the potential for creating additional employment opportunities. It also has a provision to prevent the use of antibiotics and pharmacologically active substances which are harmful to human health in coastal aquaculture.

BJP MP Rama Devi, who was officiating as the Speaker had to adjourn the House as the members kept up with their protests.

The current session is scheduled to end on Thursday.

Azad's version of Cong.-PDP alliance a lie: party leader

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Wednesday described the references made to the 2002 PDP-Congress government formation in Jammu and Kashmir by former Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad in his latest book, as "blatant lies".

"It was Ms. [Sonia] Gandhi who sent Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2002 to Kashmir to negotiate the alliance's agenda. If Azad had numbers, as he claims in the book, why didn't he stake the claim to form the government," Naem Akhtar, senior PDP leader, told *The Hindu*.

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कार्यालय श्री सांवलियाजी मन्दिर मण्डल
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क्रमांक/लेखा/श्रीसांमंम/2023-24/03 दिनांक- 03.04.2023
ई-निविदा सूचना 2023-24/01
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'No firm invested in Ladakh in past 3 years'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs informed the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday that no Indian company including multinationals had invested in Ladakh in the past three years.

It added that no land had been bought from people outside the Union Territory of Ladakh during the same period.

Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in a written reply, that 185 persons from outside the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir had bought land in the Union Territory during the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

He added that a total of 1,559 Indian companies, including multinational companies, had made investments in the Union Territory.

'NGO behind Vedanta stir under scrutiny'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry informed the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, that it was examining complaints against an NGO – The Other Media– for misusing foreign funds to organise protests and demonstrations around Vedanta's Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu.

Responding to a question, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said that it had received some representation and complaints alleging violation of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 by the New Delhi-based NGO.

During the past three financial years, foreign contribution of ₹3.54 crore was received and ₹2.79 crore was utilised by the association.

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INBRIEF

Unseasonal rain is a natural calamity: Maharashtra govt.

The Maharashtra Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, said on Wednesday that unseasonal rain would be considered a "natural calamity" in order to provide relief to farmers who were affected in the State. "We are the first State in the country to consider unseasonal rains a natural calamity. A separate category was created for this," an official at the Chief Minister's Office said.

India gets elected to UN Statistical Commission

India has been elected to the highest statistical body of the United Nations for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2024. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar tweeted, "Congrats Team @IndiaUNNewYork for coming through so strongly in a competitive election," he said. India secured 46 out of 53 votes in the election to the UN Statistical Commission election. PTI

Not declaring deletions in textbooks an 'oversight', says head of NCERT

The issue is being blown out of proportion, says D.P. Saklani, reacting to the controversy over the removal of sentences on Gandhiji and the RSS; Congress president Kharge says the BJP cannot erase history, no matter how hard it tries

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the key government body that produces textbooks for students from Classes 1 to 12, has claimed that the key deletions in the rationalised syllabus for 2023-24, which include Hindu extremists' dislike for Gandhiji and a ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) after his assassination, were not declared in the public domain due to an "oversight".

"The process of rationalisation of content happened during COVID-19 and this has been done in subjects of science, maths, commerce and so on as well. While all changes were reported on our website last year, this particular change may have not been reported due to oversight," NCERT Director D.P. Saklani told *The Hindu*.

Missing pieces: The key deletions in the textbooks are in the rationalised syllabus for 2023-24. FILE PHOTO

The Education Ministry has refrained from commenting on the development.

Sentences deleted from the Class 12 political science textbooks include: "His steadfast pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity provoked Hindu extremists so much that they made several attempts to assassinate Gandhiji..."; "Gandhiji's death had an almost magical effect on the communal situation in the country... The Government of India cracked down on organisations that were spreading communal hatred. Organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh were banned for some time...'

On comparing the new and the old versions of the NCERT's textbooks, it was revealed that the reference to Gujarat riots of 2002 in the political science textbook has been reduced from a two-page chapter to simply two lines. Crucial illustrations and speech bubbles, which included questions on the Gujarat riots, such as "Can we ensure that those who plan, execute and support such massacres are brought to the book? Or at least punished politically?", have been scrapped.

Dr. Saklani said the issue was being "blown out of proportion" and that those doing it were taking a "narrow-minded" approach.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the RSS cannot erase history, no matter how hard they tried.

"You can [make] changes in textbooks but you cannot change the history of the country. This is an attempt by the BJP-RSS. They can try as much as they want, but they cannot erase history," Mr. Kharge said.

Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari said the attempt at rewriting history has been an ongoing endeavour for the BJP-RSS. "I recall that in the first and second NDA (National Democratic Alliance) governments in 1998-99, this particular project was being unveiled. The only thing I would like to say is that you can distort history but you cannot erase it. Truth has a way of manifesting itself," Mr. Tewari said.

Speeches of PM, President to be aired on Amazon Music

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Information & Broadcasting Ministry on Wednesday entered into an agreement with Amazon India under which the speeches of President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be streamed via Alexa and Amazon Music.

A Ministry statement said content related to key events of national importance and public interest campaigns and news bulletins too would be streamed. The Letter of Engagement provides for a partnership between organisations under the Ministry and Amazon India verticals. On the Ministry side, they include the National Film Development Corporation, Prasar Bharati, the Publications Division, the Film & Television Institute of India and the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute.

Information Commission tells CRPF to share inquiry report on T.N. officer's death

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

In a rare order, the Central Information Commission (CIC) has overruled the decision of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) claiming exemption from disclosure of information sought under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005. The panel has directed the Chief Public Information Officer (CPIO) to share details of the Court of Inquiry constituted to investigate the circumstances that led to the death of Assistant Commandant M. Arvind on August 23, 2019.

The case pertains to the death of Arvind (33), from Coimbatore, who served as Assistant Commandant, 40th BN, Anantnag, Kashmir.

The officer allegedly killed himself on the night of August 23, 2019 at his residence. Dismissing reports that the alleged suicide was triggered by poor living conditions, the CRPF had issued a statement that there was no foul play, and initial inquiry had pointed to marital problems.

M. Arvind

Arvind's father, K.S. Mani, wrote to the CRPF authorities seeking certain details of the Court of Inquiry. However, the CPIO replied that security forces such as the CRPF, were exempted from providing information, except details related to allegations of corruption or violation of human rights under Section 24(1) of the RTI Act.

Aggrieved over the response of the CPIO and the first appellate authority, the petitioner moved the CIC for relief. He participated in the hearing along with his daughter Anitha who stated that the matter involved violation of human rights as her brother died under suspicious circumstances.

CRPF counsel Aijaz Rasheed Ganai, who participated in the hearing, contended that the matter was under investigation. He said a copy of the general diary, death certificate of the appellant's son, postmortem report, and the Court of Inquiry's final order had already been provided to the appellant. However, the complete Court of Inquiry proceeding was not disclosed since it was a restricted document.

Passing orders in the case, the Chief Information Commissioner, Y.K. Sinha said: "In view of the personal loss suffered by the appellant due to the demise of his son, the rights of the next of the kin and the allegations made by him during the hearing, the Commission finds this as a fit case for allowing disclosure of information invoking the proviso to Section 24(1) regarding allegation of violation of human rights."

Those who require assistance for overcoming suicidal thoughts may contact the Tamil Nadu State Helpline Number 104 or Aasra 022-27546669 or the Vandrevala Foundation 18602662345.

Mulayam, Mahalanabis get Padma Vibhushan honour posthumously

Akhilesh Yadav collects the Padma Vibhushan on behalf of the late Mulayam Singh from President Droupadi Murmu. PTI

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Veteran socialist leader and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, the late Mulayam Singh, and the late Dilip Mahalanabis, a medical professional known globally for his work on Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), were honoured with the Padma Vibhushan by President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday.

Author and philanthropist Sudha Murty, physicist Deepak Dhar, known for his long-standing research career in statistical physics, novelist S.L. Bhyrappa and Vedic scholar Tridandi Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji were given the Padma Bhushan at a function held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Mulayam, who was also India's Defence Minister and long-time parliamentarian, and Mahalanabis, who returned from the U.S. to serve in the 1971 Bangladesh war refugee camps, were given the honour posthumously.

Mulayam's son, former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, received the award on his behalf, while Mahalanabis's award was received by his nephew.

A total of 53 awardees were given the honour on Wednesday.

Scindia says Cong. only left with ideology of 'traitor'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday launched a stinging attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and the Congress, accusing the party of being left with no ideology except the one of a "traitor" which works against the country.

Hitting back at Mr. Scindia, the Congress said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should "beware" of a man who did not stay loyal to his former party, and would also "not be loyal" to the BJP.

The Congress has insulted Backward Classes, sought proof of our armed forces' bravery and spoken about our soldiers being beaten up by China, Mr. Scindia said in a direct attack on Mr. Gandhi.

The Minister said the Congress was projecting the "personal legal battle" of Mr. Gandhi as a fight for democracy.

Senior Congress leader Manish Tewari said a person who dislodged an elected government in Madhya Pradesh through "illegitimate means" should not talk about others.

Lumpy skin disease led to stagnation in milk production: Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Increase in the prices of fodder and its scarcity was another reason for the inflation in cost

The Centre is foreseeing a "stagnation" in milk production and a possible scarcity of ghee and butter as an impact of the lumpy skin disease (LSD) that took the lives of about 1.89 lakh cattle recently.

Rajesh Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, said all options, including import of certain milk products, would be considered by the government if the situation remained unchanged. He said increase in the prices of fodder and its scarcity was another reason for the "price inflation" in milk and its products. The country had last imported milk products in 2011.

"Normally, milk production is growing at 6% per year. This year, it is either stagnant or has grown at 1% or 2%. The data from the cooperative sector show the production has grown at 2%. But, if we take the data of private sector, we assume that the production is stagnant," he told presspersons here on Wednesday.

The demand for milk, however, has grown by 8% to 10%. The demand was suppressed during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Ghee, butter shortage

"People did not invest in this sector during the period. As a result there is price inflation in milk. Milk supplies are not seriously constrained, but in the case of ghee and butter, we may face some constraints. Stocks are little lower than they were in last year," he said.

He said increase in the prices of fodder was a reason for the stagnation in production and for price rise.

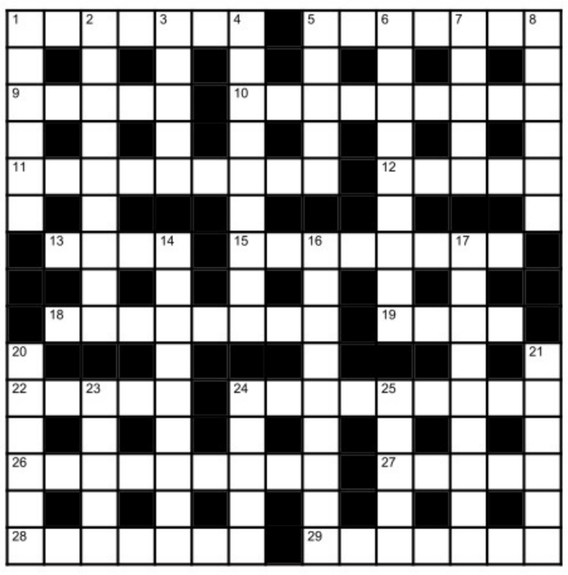
"Fodder cultivation area is around 4% for the past five decades. But our dairy sector is growing at a rate of 6%. Seasonal and regional scarcity results in price rise. We will even out this once investment comes both by farmers and industries in this sector," he said.

CROSSWORD + 13832

(set by Arden)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Many a discharge from a mass of tissues (7)
5 Strange code, strange etiquette (7)
9 Lover's love to chase capital (5)
10 Clubs, say, involved in tourism (5,4)
11 Holding back some oil of tropical fruit? (9)
12 Follow orders in part of London (3,2)
13 Insect bite returns (4)
15 Is intellectual wasted by the ruler? (8)
18 Put down study for CAT perhaps (8)
19 Honesty can be lost, that's grim (4)
22 Writing to impress? Bring it all out (5)
24 Hard to enter capital? Look back, you hypocrites! (9)
26 Fearful of being turned into stone (9)
27 Some special attention for coffee (5)
28 Squash — ask family to accompany (7)
29 A month and a day in a scientist's possession (7)

Down

1 Property vacated, guy finds a gem stone (6)
2 Recline precariously all around me and crush (9)
3 Confirmation of pressure applied on top (5)
4 Not to climb on top — it's easy, stupid! (9)
5 It's possibly found in Gold Coast (5)
6 Stole a vehicle, that's what the boy intended (9)
7 America in decay, wake up! (5)
8 Masters can be allowed in late at night for prayers (6)
14 Besides the limited choice for a morsel hunter (9)
16 Admission of wrong doing by subject (9)
17 At sea, nude characters felt sea sick (9)
20 Hold, hold a short line — it may happen (4,2)
21 Back like a bird (6)
23 Pole goes into temporary shelter (5)
24 Cell missing second faulty protein (5)
25 Normal sights while going north — keeping faith (5)

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

A	L	F	R	E	S	C	O		J	U	D	A	I	C
R		R		Y		H		M		N		B		R
C	H	I	M	E	R	A		A	N	C	H	U	S	A
A		N		S		R		R		L		T		S
N	I	G	H	T		L	O	T	T	E	R	I	E	S
E		E		R		O		I				L		E
				C	A	N	T	A	N	K	E	R	O	U	S
C		S		I		T		S		N		N		T
I	N	C	A	N	D	E	S	C	E	N	T			
A		U				R		O		O		G		Y
B	E	L	E	A	G	U	E	R		B	R	A	C	E
A		L		L		S		S		L		L		M
T	R	I	F	L	E	S		E	P	I	S	O	D	E
T		O		O		E		S		N		S		N
A	G	N	A	T	E		F	E	N	G	S	H	U	I

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

5	9	4	3	7	2	6	8	1
8	6	1	4	9	5	7	3	2
7	3	2	6	1	8	5	9	4
9	5	7	8	4	1	3	2	6
4	2	8	9	6	3	1	5	7
6	1	3	2	5	7	8	4	9
3	8	6	1	2	9	4	7	5
2	4	5	7	8	6	9	1	3
1	7	9	5	3	4	2	6	8

FAITH

Glory of Lord Muruga

The scriptures say that there are two major types of disease – internal disease and external disease. External disease refers to the discomfort to our mortal coil, that is, the physical body. Internal disease refers to the destiny of our soul having to be born and to die repeatedly, which is caused by previous deeds.

Saint Arunagiri Nadhar was suffering from a dreadful disease and with the blessings of Lord Muruga, he had overcome it. The saint composed various hymns on the Lord such as Kandhar Alankaram, Vel Virutham, Mayil Viruthum, Seval Virutham, Anubhoothi, Thiruvaguppugal. The prosody of his hymns is of a very high standard and is in a mellifluous language. The saint classified the Thiruvaguppugal into three divisions as Seer padha vagupu, Devendra sanga vagupu and Vel vagupu. In the last division, he sang about 16 hymns.

It is said that the holy symbol of the Vel is given to Lord Muruga by Goddess Parasakthi, embedding all Her spiritual powers in it. The holy Vel is not only powerful but also gives us victory in all spheres of our life. The saint says in the Thiruppugazh that the Vel destroys our sinful deeds (oozh vinai).

The credit of preaching the Thiruppugazh all over the world goes to Sri Sachidhananda Swamigal, an ardent devotee of Lord Muruga, Smt. Vasuki Manoharan said in a discourse. He restructured some verses and defined a method of recitation in the hymns of Vel Vaguppugal called 'Vel Maaral'. Recitation of the Kandha Sashti Kavacham and Kandha Guru Kavacham in praise of Lord Muruga will alleviate not only our disease but also our fears.

SEOUL

U.S., South Korea hold air drills involving B-52H strategic bomber

AP

South Korea and the United States on Wednesday staged joint air drills involving at least one U.S. nuclear-capable B-52H strategic bomber, Seoul's military said. North Korea views such exercises as rehearsals for invasion, and has responded to other recent drills with a spate of increasingly provocative banned weapons tests. AFP

NEW YORK

Johnson & Johnson offers $8.9-bn settlement of talc cancer claims

REUTERS

Johnson & Johnson on Tuesday proposed an $8.9-billion settlement to resolve years-old lawsuits claiming that its talcum powder products caused cancer. The New Jersey-based company said the proposed settlement "will equitably and efficiently resolve all claims arising from cosmetic talc litigation". AFP

ANKARA

At least 3 dead as Ukraine-bound cargo ship sinks off Turkish coast

AFP

A Guinea-Bissau flagged cargo ship with 14 crew members on board sank off Turkey's Mediterranean coast on Wednesday, killing at least three of them. Five people were rescued, officials said. The *Joe 2* sank off the coast of Kumluca, in Antalya province, while heading to Ukraine from Iskenderun port, Governor Ersin Yazici said. AP

LOS ANGELES

U.S. House Speaker meets Taiwan President despite China's threats

AFP

U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy sat down with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen on Wednesday for a meeting in California that has already prompted outrage from China. A pro-China demonstration gathered nearby chanting "One China", as Ms. Tsai arrived on Tuesday, following her Central American tour. AFP

Defendant Trump slams criminal charges as 'insult to our country'

Former U.S. President pleads not guilty to 34 felony counts in dramatic hearing in New York; charged over hush money payments to a porn star, he later tells supporters that his only crime was 'fearlessly defending' America

Agence France-Presse
PALM BEACH

Due process: Donald Trump, facing criminal charges, appears in the Manhattan Criminal Court, New York, on Tuesday. AFP

Donald Trump offered a full-throated defence of his conduct on Tuesday in his first public remarks since being charged over hush money payments to a porn star, blasting the criminal prosecution as "an insult to our country."

Hours earlier the 76-year-old former U.S. President pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts in a dramatic hearing in New York that transfixed the nation -- and began the countdown to the first ever criminal trial of an American President.

"I never thought anything like this could happen in America – never thought it could happen," Mr. Trump told an audience of several hundred donors, political allies and other supporters after returning to Mar-a-Lago, his beachfront mansion in southern Florida.

"The only crime that I've committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it... It's an insult to our country."

Mr. Trump – the frontrunner in the race for the 2024 Republican nomination – said from a stage festooned with American flags in an opulent gold-and-cream ballroom that "radical left" prosecutors were out to get him "at any cost."

The bizarrely celebratory mood in the room seemed at odds with the gravity of the day's events in Manhattan, with Mr. Trump reprising the applause lines that his supporters hear regularly at his rallies – and being rewarded with the same boisterous cheers and clapping.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg is prosecuting Mr. Trump for cooking his company's books to hide payments he arranged for adult film actress Stormy Daniels days before the 2016 election. Mr. Trump's former chief financial officer Allen Weisselberg is serving a five-month jail term for the same charge of falsifying business records.

Manhattan prosecutors say Mr. Trump "repeatedly and fraudulently falsified New York business records to conceal criminal conduct that hid damaging information from the voting public during the 2016 election." A "statement of facts" released alongside the indictment included details of hush money payments to Ms. Daniels, Playboy model Karen McDougal and a former Trump Tower doorman. Ms. Daniels was paid $130,000 by former Mr. Trump lawyer Michael Cohen, while Ms. McDougal and the doorman got $150,000 and $30,000, respectively from AMI, the publishers of supermarket tabloid the *National Enquirer*.

Clashes erupt as Israel police storm mosque in Jerusalem

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

More than 350 people were arrested during the raid, which drew threats from Palestinian groups

The Israeli Police clashed with Palestinians inside Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque on Wednesday, sparking an exchange of rockets and air strikes, in flaring violence as the Jewish Passover overlaps with Ramzan. Armed police in riot gear stormed the mosque's prayer hall before dawn.

The officers were met with a barrage of rocks and fireworks, police video showed. More than 350 arrests were made in the raid, which drew threats from Palestinian groups and wide condemnation from Muslim countries.

Abdel Karim Ikraiem charged that police, armed with batons, tear gas grenades and smoke bombs, burst into the mosque "by force" and "beat the women and men" worshipping there. Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir later offered his "complete backing" to police and their "swift" actions.

Palestinian militant group Hamas called on West Bank Palestinians "to go *en masse* to the Al-Aqsa mosque to defend it".

On Gaza's streets overnight, protesters burnt tyres and chanted: "We swear to defend and protect the Al-Aqsa mosque."

SARS-CoV-2 virus not found in animal samples from Huanan seafood market, says study

R. Prasad
CHENNAI

In this file picture, health workers disinfect the Huanan Seafood market, where COVID-19 is believed to have first surfaced in Wuhan. REUTERS

An analysis of environmental and animal samples for SARS-CoV-2 in the Huanan seafood market, Wuhan, China, in early 2020, detected the virus in environmental swabs but not in samples taken from animals, according to a study published in *Nature* on Wednesday. Further analysis of the genomic material in both virus-positive and virus-negative environmental samples revealed that a wide range of animals were present at the market.

This included the raccoon dogs, which have been hypothesised to be potential intermediate hosts for the virus. However, the study did not find any animal species to be infected. The study has thus not been able to determine the origin of the virus.

George F. Gao and his colleagues from China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP), who carried out the study published in *Nature*, did find the virus in the environmental samples in the Huanan Seafood market during the early stages of the pandemic. But no animal samples (raccoon dogs included) tested positive and they have not been able to provide evidence of potential spillover of the virus from animals to humans.

"The environmental samples cannot prove that the animals were infected. Furthermore, even if the animals were infected, our study does not rule out that human-to-animal transmission occurred, considering the sampling time was after the human infection within the market as reported retrospectively. Thus, the possibility of potential introduction of the virus to the market through infected humans, or cold chain products, cannot be ruled out yet," they write.

The absence of the virus in samples collected from raccoon dogs and the inability of the study to establish the origin of the virus is in complete variance to the conclusions made by a team led by Michael Worobey, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Arizona, in a report posted in a public repository on March 20. Dr. Worobey's team had used the genome data from the Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data (GISAID) by the researchers of the April 5 paper.

Since the clusters of early human cases in December 2019 was associated with the market, the researchers collected samples from the environment and animals (unsold goods found in refrigerators and freezers, swabs from stray animals and their faeces) in and around the market from January 1 to March 30, 2020. In all, 1,380 samples were collected (923 environmental and 457 samples from 18 animal species). The virus was detected using RT-PCR in 73 environmental samples, but none of the animal samples, as per the study. Three live viruses were successfully isolated. The viruses from the market had 99.99-100% similarity with the human isolates.

Among the 828 samples collected from inside the market, 64 samples (7.7%) were positive for the virus. Of the 64 positive samples, 56 were collected from the market's west zone. Among the 14 samples from warehouses related to the market, five tested positive. "This may reflect the nature of SARS-CoV-2 presence in the market during the early phase of the outbreak," they write. Of the 51 samples collected from sewerage wells surrounding the market, three tested positive; all four samples from sewerage wells inside the market tested positive. The sampling was "biased" as shops in the west zone selling wildlife and those linked to early cases were prioritised for sampling.

Husband of former Scottish leader held over alleged financial irregularities

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

The police in Scotland cordoned off the Glasgow home of former Scottish National Party (SNP) Chief Nicola Sturgeon and her husband Peter Murrell, on Wednesday, after Mr. Murrell was arrested over allegations of financial irregularities in the SNP. Footage of their home, which had apparently become a crime scene, flashed across screens in the U.K., weeks after Ms. Sturgeon had stepped down as leader of her party.

Police Scotland (the Scottish police), announced that a 58-year-old man had been arrested in connection with an "ongoing investigation into the funding and finances of the Scottish National Party".

The man was being questioned by detectives and searches were on at several locations, the police said.

Ms. Sturgeon's new successor, Humza Yousaf, told *Sky News* that it was a "difficult day" for the SNP but that Ms. Sturgeon's legacy would "stand firm" and that he would build on that legacy.

The police have been investigating the SNP since 2021 over the whereabouts of £600,000 in donations for an (i.e., another) independence referendum. Mr. Murrell has been Chief Executive of the SNP for over 20 years. He had resigned from the position in March over a controversy around inflated party membership numbers. Mr. Murrell and Ms. Sturgeon have been married since 2010.

ADB

THOOTHUKUDI CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date :	**6th April 2023**
Loan No. and Title :	Asian Development Fund assisted Tamilnadu Urban Flagship Investment Programme (TNUFIP-Tranche-III)
Contract No. and Title :	**Tender Notice No : E1/9047/2014/SWDPh-IV** 1) Construction of Storm Water Drain from Athiparasakthi Nagar to Dhansekar Nagar (Via Machadu Nagar Rahamath Nagar, Muthammal Colony, Ayyasamy Colony) **Package-1** 2) Construction of Storm Water Drain from at Bharathi Nagar to Chinnakkannupuram (Via Muthammal Colony, Nethaji Nagar and Devar Colony) **Package-2** 3) Construction of Storm Water Drain from Dhansekarnagar to Meelavettan Main Road,(Via Ettayapuram Main Road , Polepettai West Road) Vishwapuram, Yogeswar Colony, Annai Indra Nagar, Ayyappan Nagar, kurinij Nagar **Package-3** 4) Construction of Storm Water Drain from PonSubbiah Nagar to Loorthammalpuram Main Road (Via St.Mary's Colony and Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, Kalaignar Nagar, Sivarajpuram) **Package-4**
Deadline for Submission of Bids :	**25th May 2023, 15:00 hours (IST)**

1. The Government of India has applied for financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Program–Tranche 3. Part of this financing will be used for payments under the Contract named above. Bidding is open to Bidders from eligible source countries of the ADB.
2. **The Commissioner, Thoothukudi City Municipal Corporation, Thoothukudi** ("the Employer") invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for the construction and completion of "

Package No	Name Of Work	Estimate Amount (Rs.in Lakhs)	Bid Security (Rs.in Lakhs)	Period of Contract
Package-1	Construction of Storm Water Drain from Athiparasakthi Nagar to Dhansekar Nagar (Via Machadu Nagar Rahamath Nagar, Muthammal Colony, Ayyasamy Colony)	**2459.00**	**24.59**	**18 Months**
Package-2	Construction of Storm Water Drain from at Bharathi Nagar to Chinnakkannupuram (Via Muthammal Colony, Nethaji Nagar and Devar Colony)	**2037.00**	**20.37**	**18 Months**
Package-3	Construction of Storm Water Drain from Dhansekarnagar to Meelavettan Main Road, (Via Ettayapuram Main Road, Polepettai West Road) Vishwapuram, Yogeswar Colony, Annai Indra Nagar, Ayyappan Nagar, kurinij Nagar	**2104.00**	**21.04**	**18 Months**
Package-4	Construction of Storm Water Drain from PonSubbiah Nagar to Loorthammalpuram Main Road (Via St.Mary's Colony and Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, Kalaignar Nagar, Sivarajpuram)	**1698.00**	**16.98**	**18 Months**

3. **National Competitive Bidding** will be conducted in accordance with ADB's Single-Stage : Two Envelope bidding procedure and is open to all bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Document.
4. Only eligible Bidders with the following key qualifications should participate in this bidding;

Eligibility Criteria	Package-1	Package-2	Package-3	Package-4
Minimum average annual turnover **INR Value** of calculated as total certified received payments for contracts in processor completed, within the last three (3) years	INR 24.59 Crore	INR 20.37 Crore	INR 21.04 Crore	INR 16.98 Crore
Has Financial resources, less its financial obligations for its current contract commitments defined, meet or exceed the total requirement for the Subject Contract of **INR Value**	INR 3.69 Crore	INR 3.06 Crore	INR 3.16 Crore	INR 2.55 Crore
Participation in at least one contract that has been successfully or substantially completed within the last five years and that is similar to the proposed contract, where the value of the Bidder's participation exceed **INR Value** of the similarity of the Bidder's participation shall be based on the physical size, nature of works, complexity, methods, technology, or other characteristics as described in Section 6 (Employer's Requirements).	INR 12.30 Crore	INR 10.19 Crore	INR 10.52 Crore	INR 8.49 Crore

- Meets other Personnel and Equipment requirements as stipulated in the Bidding Document.
  Further details are indicated in the 'Section 3 – Evaluation and Qualification Criteria' of the Bidding Document.

5. To obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents, Bidders should contact :
   The Commissioner, Thoothukudi City Municipal Corporation
   113 Thamilzh Salai (Palai Road) Thoothukudi - 628 001.
   Telephone No : (0461) 2326901, 2326902. E.mail : commrtcmc@gmail.com
6. A pre-bid meeting shall take place on **18th April 2023 at 11.00 Hours (IST)** at the address stated above.
7. To purchase the bidding documents in English language, eligible Bidders should :
   - Visit the Office of the City Engineer, Thoothukudi City Municipal Corporation, 113 Thamilzh Salai (Palai Road), Thoothukudi and pay a non-refundable fee of INR 2500 towards the cost of bidding document in the form of Bank Demand Draft in favor of the Commissioner, Thoothukudi City Municipal Corporation, Thoothukudi.
   - In case of written request, the document will be sent by post/courier. Bidders who wish to receive the bidding document by post/courier shall have to pay an additional amount of INR 5000 for delivery within India or US$ 250 for delivery outside India. The method of payment will be through Bank Demand Draft in favor of the Commissioner, Thoothukudi City Municipal Corporation, Thoothukudi No liability will be accepted for loss or late delivery.
   - Eligible bidders may otherwise download the bidding document in English language at free of cost in the website **(i) https://tntenders.gov.in**
   - Eligible bidders who download the bidding document from above website shall inform the City Engineer, Thoothukudi City Municipal Corporation, 113 Thamilzh Salai (Palai Road), Thoothukudi in writing (and provide the contact details) at the address given above, failing which the City Engineer, Thoothukudi City Municipal Corporation shall not be responsible if the bidder does not receive clarifications and amendments, if any.
8. Bids should be submitted :
   - To the address above.
   - On or before the deadline : **25th May 2023, at 15.00 Hours (IST).**
   - Together with a Bid Security as described in the Bidding Document.
   - Electronic submission is Allowed.
9. Technical bids will be opened on **25th May 2023, at 15.30 Hours (IST)** in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend, whereas the financial bids shall remain sealed and unopened and shall be placed locked. The financial bids of only technically responsible and qualified bidders shall be opened after technical bid evaluation, whereas, the financial bids of those bidders whose technical bids are not responsive and qualified shall be returned unopened after the contract is awarded.

Commissioner
Thoothukudi City Municipal Corporation

DIPR/ 2000 /TENDER/2023 "சோதனை கடந்து சுதந்திரம் அடைந்தோம், சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம்"

INBRIEF

Reliance, Jio raise $5 billion in India's largest syndicated loan

Reliance Industries Ltd., and its telecom arm Jio Infocomm have raised a total of $5 billion in foreign currency loans, the largest syndicated loan in India's history, sources said. Reliance last week raised $3 billion and Reliance Jio Infocomm secured additional credit of $2 billion. Reliance will deploy the funds raised towards its capital expenditure, while Jio would put the money to finance its nationwide 5G network rollout.

Shriram Finance to pay up to 9.15% on FDs for senior women

Shriram Finance Ltd., a part of the Shriram Group, has introduced a special fixed deposit scheme under the Shriram Unnati Jubilee Deposit category for a limited period that provides 'highest' FD rates of up to 9.15% per annum for senior women citizens. It is a special scheme for a tenure of 50 months starting April 5. The introduction of the scheme coincides with the group's golden jubilee celebrations, the company said in a statement.

South Indian Bank to offer Chola MS insurance products

South Indian Bank Ltd. has tied up with Cholamandalam MS General Insurance (Chola MS) to offer the latter's health and general insurance products to the bank's customers. This partnership would enable customers of the bank access the diverse range of insurance products offered by Chola MS, thus fulfilling their need for protection against damage/loss, the private sector lender said in a statement.

Services PMI signals slowdown in sector's growth in March: S&P Global

No fresh hiring reported by 98% of the firms that had been surveyed, overall level of positive sentiment declines to an 8-month low as several companies foresee no change in activity from present levels; PMI eases to 57.8 from 59.4 in Feb.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's services sector lost some growth momentum in March, even as new orders and output continued to rise for the 20th straight month the S&P Global India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) showed. The PMI slowed to 57.8, from 59.4 in February. A reading above 50 indicates expansion in activity.

Although input cost inflation dropped to the lowest level since September 2020, firms reported higher expenses on account of rising food, fuel, transportation and wage costs. New hiring was fractional, with almost 98% of firms leaving their payroll numbers unchanged from February.

Slowing services

S&P Global's survey shows momentum slowed even as new orders and output expanded for a 20th straight month

- While input cost inflation eased to the lowest since September 2020, firms reported higher expenses as food, fuel, transportation and wage costs rose
- Services providers passed on higher costs by raising selling prices at a three-month high pace
- All four broad areas of services posted growth with consumer services topping

Firms reported an uptick in international orders even as overall order books grew at a softer pace than in February. Services providers also passed on higher cost burdens to clients by raising selling prices at a three-month high pace.

On average, services firms were optimistic about business volumes rising a year ahead, but the overall level of positive sentiment fell to an eight-month low as several firms foresee no change in activity from present levels.

"As has been the case for three successive months, all four broad areas of the service economy registered growth of new business and output," S&P Global said in a note. "Consumer services topped the rankings again on both fronts, while the slowest increases were seen in real estate and business services," it added.

Manufacturing had retaken the mantle as the main driver of growth momentum, reckoned Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Sensex surges 1% ahead of RBI policy

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Key benchmark stock indices on Wednesday surged 1% backed by gains in banking and heavyweight stocks, ahead of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy review on Thursday.

The S&P BSE Sensex gained 0.99%, or 582.87 points, to close at 59,689.31 points. The top gainers in Sensex include L&T (3.95%), HDFC (2.98%), and Sun Pharma (1.93%). The NSE Nifty-50 index too surged to 17,557.05 points, up 159 points, or 0.91%.

'The domestic market is displaying resilience, unaffected by weak global peers, due to strong banks'

Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services said, "The domestic market is displaying resilience, unaffected by the weaker global peers, thanks to strong banks. Additionally, recent U.S. data increase the likelihood of a pause in rate hikes by the Federal Reserve."

IFC says to stop funding new coal related infra projects

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of The World Bank, has said it will not support investments in new coal related projects. The IFC funds banks and other financial institutions that in turn lend to infrastructure and energy projects. The IFC has reportedly lent close to $5 billion to almost 88 financial institutions in India.

"This year (2023) IFC, is taking the next step toward alignment with Paris

Agreement ambitions... under which IFC will start requiring a commitment from financial institution clients to not originate and finance any new coal projects," the lender said in a statement on its website.

In 2020, the IFC had unveiled a policy requiring clients to cut their exposure to coal projects by half by 2025, and to zero by 2030, but did not halt new investments. The latest update disallows this too.

"We filed the first ever case... over IFC's support to a financial intermediary client backing coal in India in 2011," noted Joe Athialy of the Centre for Financial Accountability. "It has taken 13 years for the IFC to finally end support for new coal. In the meanwhile, communities got scattered, their livelihoods stolen."

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	WEDNESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	59,689	0.99
US Dollar	81.93	0.47
Gold	61,080	2.69
Brent oil	84.85	0.38

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	1698.00	-19.45
Adani Ports	636.75	8.95
Apollo Hosp	4200.95	-33.40
Asian Paints	2808.50	31.50
Axis Bank	860.50	-4.10
Bajaj Auto	4023.15	29.40
Bajaj Finserv	1279.30	-3.65
Bajaj Finance	5761.30	46.25
Bharti Airtel	763.45	2.90
BPCL	328.05	-1.90
Britannia Ind	4327.55	3.50
Cipla	895.75	4.30
Coal India	222.50	2.35
Divis Lab	2889.80	15.10
Dr Reddys Lab	4682.80	26.30
Eicher Motors	2933.75	-70.55
Grasim Ind	1659.25	31.30
HCL Tech	1111.20	13.05
HDFC	2705.95	77.00
HDFC Bank	1653.75	43.20
HDFC Life	507.75	4.05
Hero MotoCorp	2432.20	1.10
Hindalco	403.30	0.75
Hind Unilever	2582.75	46.65
ICICI Bank	884.60	0.80
IndusInd Bank	1067.20	-11.55
Infosys	1423.55	12.70
ITC	386.40	7.50
JSW Steel	686.55	4.35
Kotak Bank	1751.90	6.20
L&T	2257.75	87.60
M&M	1155.45	-14.45
Maruti Suzuki	8447.05	-56.00
NestleIndia	19822.05	116.60
NTPC	175.90	-1.90
ONGC	152.90	-0.75
PowerGrid Corp	225.65	1.05
Reliance Ind	2325.85	-5.60
SBI Life	1105.55	1.75
State Bank	523.00	-3.75
Sun Pharma	997.15	18.10
TataConsumerProduct	727.40	10.35
Tata Motors	426.55	2.30
Tata Steel	104.85	0.75
TCS	3239.80	39.80
Tech Mahindra	1103.50	0.30
Titan	2572.70	35.30
UltraTech Cement	7691.95	51.45
UPL	732.30	2.65
Wipro	369.75	1.80

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 05

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	81.80	82.12
Euro	89.48	89.84
British Pound	102.04	102.44
Japanese Yen (100)	62.21	62.46
Chinese Yuan	11.89	11.94
Swiss Franc	90.38	90.74
Singapore Dollar	61.65	61.90
Canadian Dollar	60.74	61.00
Malaysian Ringitt	18.59	18.68
Australian Dollar	54.76	54.98

Source:Indian Bank

SEBI approves Cyient DLM's ₹740-cr. initial public offer

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Electronic manufacturing services and solutions provider and Cyient subsidiary Cyient DLM has received markets regulator SEBI approval for its proposed initial public offering (IPO) comprising a fresh issue aggregating up to ₹740 crore.

Cyient DLM said it may consider a further issue of specified securities aggregating up to ₹148 crore prior to filing of the red herring prospectus with the Registrar of Companies. The funds are proposed to be used for funding incremental capital needs and capital expenditure, among other things.

Education company Veranda Race aims at ₹95 cr. FY24 revenue

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Veranda Race, which provides coaching for competitive examinations through its learning centres, is eyeing a revenue of up to ₹95 crore in FY24 by opening 30 more learning centres in neighbouring States, said CEO Bharath Seeman.

"At present, we have 45 centres in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala," he said in an interview. "This year, we will be opening 30 more learning centres in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana."

"Last year, we earned a revenue of about ₹50-60 crore and this year, we are aiming at ₹90-95 crore," he added.

Bharath Seeman

In December 2020, the Kalpathi Group-owned Veranda Learning Solutions Ltd. acquired Chennai Race Coaching Institute for ₹100 crore and rebranded it as Veranda Race.

"This year, we are planning to coach about 65,000 students, with the new centres accounting for 6,000 students," added Mr. Seeman.

We are innovating from India: Walmart

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Walmart said it was innovating the future of global retail from India, and that it has identified several core technologies locally that were expected to have a profound impact.

Hari Vasudev, Country Head, Walmart Global Tech, said core technologies such as artificial intelligence developed in the firm's Indian arm were lighting up multiple use cases within Walmart, such as its chatbot for customers.

"AI is an area of constant investment and continues to make inroads into innovative solutions at Walmart," he said.

Delivery firm Borzo aims to quadruple shipments in 2 years

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

With hyperlocal deliveries gaining traction, Borzo (formerly WeFast), a global delivery service that enables intra-city deliveries for businesses, is aiming to grow the number of deliveries in India four-fold in two years.

The company is also likely to make substantial investment in India to grow its business as well as to support its global operations.

"We are already one of the top three players in the small and medium business (SMB) segment," Eugene Panfilov, general manager, Borzo India said.

Rami Saab

"We are aiming to grow 4 to 5 times in [terms of] number of deliveries in the next 2 years," he added.

"A courier, in the future, will be able to work for us on different types of orders across the city, more locally in their neighbourhood," said Rami Saab, CEO, Borzo. "This is what we want to offer down the line."

'Small, medium IT hit by high attrition post COVID-19 lockdown'

Press Trust of India
LUCKNOW

The highest attrition rate of 35% is being seen in small and medium sector technology firms

Small and medium IT companies are yet to recover from the impact of the COVID-19-induced lockdown because of the high attrition rate of their employees after upskilling, according to a survey.

The survey by the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises - Export Promotion Council (MSME-EPC) shows the highest attrition rate of 35% is being seen in small and medium sector technology companies, where skilled employees have left their companies for higher wages.

After this, the attrition rate is 27% in the services sector. Due to this, the hopes of returning to normalcy after the epidemic in these areas have been hit.

'Higher salaries'

Releasing the findings of the survey of 700 IT units on Wednesday, D. S. Rawat, Chairman, MSME-EPC, said that a large number of employees in MSME sector companies were going to other companies for higher salaries after learning the work.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA, AT BENGALURU
PROBATE CIVIL PETITION
No. 20/2022
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF K. J. ANTONY (DECEASED)
BETWEEN:
Kiran Joseph K. A.
Son of late K. J. Antony, Aged 32 years
No. 432, 8th Cross, Domlur Layout
Bangalore, Karnataka-560071
PETITIONER
AND
NIL
RESPONDENT
NOTICE OF PETITION
WHEREAS, the Petitioner above named has filed a Petition for grant of Letters of Administration under Sections 33 (a), 219 (d), 278 & 300 OF THE INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925, in respect of the Estate of deceased K.J. Antony, who passed away on the 15th day of July 2021, at his residence i.e., No. 432, 8th Cross, Domlur Layout, Bangalore, Karnataka-560071.
Be it known that no caveat has been entered and the said petition is posted for hearing on **24th day of May 2023,** and all persons claiming to have any interest in the Estate of the deceased may come and see the proceedings before the grant of the Letters of Administration.
Given under my hand and the seal of the Court on this the 3rd day of march 2023 & 21st March 2023
By Order of the Hon'ble Court,
Assistant Registrar
High Court of Karnataka Bangalore.
Advocate for Petitioner:
Ms. SMITHA R.B.
M/s. King and Partridge Advocates
No.48, Lavelle Road, Bengaluru-560001

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client **Sri. M. Jai Kumar,** S/o late M. Munivenkataiah, R/at Jai Raj Farm, Chikanahalli Village, Tavarakere Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, intends to purchase the schedule property **from its Owner Smt. Shobha Kumaran (resident of Canada) and Smt. Sudha Chandran (resident of UAE), both daughter of late C.P.S. Menon and have entered into an Agreement of Sale dated 03.04.2023, which has been registered as Document No.BMH1-00061-2023-24, kept in C.D.No.BMHD1891, Book-I, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Jayanagar (Bommanahalli), Bangalore.**
Any person/s or authority having any right, title, interest or claim in respect of the Schedule Property or having any tenable objections to this proposed sale transaction should intimate about the same along with all supporting documents to the undersigned **within 15 days** from the date of this Public Notice, failing which, it shall be deemed that no objections from any person/s or authority and my client shall proceed to purchase the Schedule Property from them.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of **residential property bearing No.301-B, New BBMP Katha No.453/443/301/B, situated in the layout formed by the Ideal Homes Cooperative Building Society Limited in Sector No. 'B' in the Ideal Homes Township, Kenchanahalli, Bangalore South Taluk, measuring East to West: [63+50]/2 Feet and North to South :[139.5+141]/2 Feet, in all measuring 7924.13 Square Feet** & bounded on:
EAST by : Site No.301-A;
WEST by : Site No.300;
NORTH by : 40 Feet Road;
SOUTH by : Site No.296-A&B.
G. Nagarajulu Naidu, Advocate,
NN Associates & Advocates, No.8, Sunaga Arcade, III Floor, Above IDC Kitchen, 1st Main, 8th Cross, Sampangirama Nagar, Bengaluru – 560 027.
(o) 080 – 22238111.(m) +91 94480 69971.

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PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME
I, MAMATHA Kacharakanahalli Rajureddy, R/at No.147/J, Jambudvipa, 12th Main, 3rd Block, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560034 have changed my name to Mamtha Kacharakanahalli Rajureddy vide Affidavit dated 03.04.2023 sworn before Notary A.Manjula, Bengaluru.

I, S Baba Jan S/o Sardar Sab, R/at No.151/5, Ground Floor, Vasabara Pillappa Compound, Near Anjaneya Temple, Nagavarapalya, C.V.Ramar Nagar Post, Bangalore-560093 have changed my name to S Baba Jan Sab vide Affidavit dated 29.03.2023 sworn before Notary M.Rajendra, Bangalore.

I, SRINIVASA Reddy Kormangala Channapa, R/at No.147/J, Jambudvipa, 12th Main, 3rd Block, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560034 have changed my name to Srinivas Kormangala Channapa vide Affidavit dated 03.04.2023 sworn before Notary A.Manjula, Bengaluru.

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME
CHANGE OF NAME
I, **HAJIRA NUSRET** W/o Fazal M.A. resident of #49,31st Main, 3rd Cross, BTM 2nd Stage, Bengaluru - 560076 and presently residing at 214 Park Plaza Apartment, 220 Newfoundland Drive, St. Johns NL A1A0R4, have changed my daughter's name from **FARHA** to **FARHA FAZAL** vide affidavit sworn before Notary M.N. Sumana, Mysore, Dated 05-04-2023

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CHANGE OF NAME
I, LEELA Rao Yedahakkalu Govinda Rao,W/O Yedahakkalu Govinda Rao,R/O 49 Shanthala 2nd Mn 2nd Cs Devaraj Urs Rd Vinobhanagara, Shivamogga,Bangalore–577204.have changed my name as "Leelavathi Yedahakkalu Govinda Rao" vide afdvt dtd 03/04/2023

I, AMULYA Arumugham D/o Arumugham.M.S. aged about 20 years R/at #524, First Floor, 4th Cross,12th Main, Indiranagar, Near Indiranagar Club, H.A.L II Stage, Bangalore North-560008 have changed my name from Amulya Arumugham to Amulya Kumar vide affidavit dated 03-04-2023 before Notary K.S.Giridhar, Bengaluru.

I Jessica Rachel John D/o John David Prabakaran, W/o Johann Thomas Benjamin, residing at A2-1203, Golden Palms, K Narayanapura,Near Kristu Jayanti College Kothanur Po, Dr. Shivarama Karanth Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560077, have changed my name to Jessica Rachel Johann for all purposes in future.

PUBLIC NOTICE
BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL BENGALURU BENCH AT BENGALURU
(ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
IN THE MATTER OF COMPANIES ACT, 2013
AND
IN THE MATTER OF SECTION 66 OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2013
AND
IN THE MATTER OF IBM GLOBAL FINANCING INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
CP No. 100 / BB/2022
IBM GLOBAL FINANCING INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
CIN: U65990KA2016FTC093733
Registered Office at No.12, Subramanya Arcade,
Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore - 560029
...PETITIONER COMPANY
NOTICE OF ORDER CONFIRMING REDUCTION OF SHARE CAPITAL
Notice is hereby given that, the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal at Bengaluru by its order dated the 17.03.2023, confirmed the reduction of share capital of the above-named company from INR 52,00,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty-Two Crores Only) consisting of 5,20,00,000 (Five Crore Twenty Lakhs) equity shares of Rs. 10/- (Rupees Ten) each fully paid to INR 1,00,000 (Rupees One Lakh Only) consisting of 10,000 (Ten Thousand) equity shares of INR 10 (Rupee Ten) each fully paid up.
Dated this 6th Day of April 2023
SAJI P. JOHN
SPJ LEGAL
ADVOCATES
Unit No.306, 3rd Floor, # 30, Prestige Meridian II, M G Road
Bengaluru - 560001
Email : saji@spjlegal.com

BIG BOOST

Kolkata Knight Riders ropes in Jason Roy for ₹2.8 crore

England opener Jason Roy was on Wednesday roped in by Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for ₹2.8 crores to give the side a boost following the injury to Shreyas Iyer and the pull-out of Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan. Roy will be available for selection for KKR's match against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad on April 9.

BATTING WOES

Agarkar admits Delhi Capitals failed as a unit in both games

Delhi Capitals' assistant coach Ajit Agarkar acknowledged the team's failure, for the second time, as a batting unit against Gujarat Titans on Tuesday. "In both games, none of our top-order batters really got going. We've not had big runs at the top like some of the other teams have got and you can see the difference."

MAKING AN IMPRESSION

Sai Sudharsan certainly created an impact, says Kumble

Sai Sudharsan looked an organised player and created an impact for Gujarat Titans against Delhi Capitals in the IPL game on Tuesday, said Anil Kumble. "He looked like a very organised player. Good against fast bowling, good against swing. He came into the first game as an impact player and certainly created an impact."

HONOUR

Dhoni among five Indian cricketers to get MCC life membership

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) on Wednesday gave Life Membership to World Cup-winning captain M.S. Dhoni, along with four other distinguished India internationals. They include Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, former women's National captain Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami.

Prabhsimran, Dhawan and Ellis on fire as Kings nail a thriller

The Punjab side's openers set up a formidable total before the Aussie speedster, with a four-wicket haul, helps the team emerge victorious by five runs against Royals whose batters fail to get going after good starts

IPL-16

Pranay Rajiv
GUWAHATI

The contests between Rajasthan Royals and Punjab Kings have often been high-scoring thrillers in IPL over the last few years. On Wednesday, that legacy emerged intact as Kings dug deep to overcome Royals by five runs in Guwahati's first-ever IPL game at the Barsapara Stadium on Wednesday.

Sam Curran defended 16 runs off the last over after impact substitute Dhruv Jurel and Shimron Hetmyer dragged Royals back into the match with some mighty hits.

Australian pacer Nathan Ellis (4/30) starred with the ball, as Kings struck regular blows to derail Royals' chase to record its second win on the trot.

Earlier, Kings continued with its aggressive approach with the bat as openers Prabhsimran Singh (60) and Shikhar Dhawan (86 n.o.) delivered the big blows to prop their side to a winning total of 197.

Dhawan, after starting slowly, turned it up a notch after getting to his half-century as he brought out his reverse sweeps and scoops.

A free-flowing Prabhsimran was comfortable against everything the Royals' bowling had to offer and had to walk back only after an excellent diving catch by Jos Buttler off Jason Holder's bowling.

Royals thought they had pulled the game back in the death as they gave away only 45 runs in the last five overs. But in the end, their effort to proved to be insufficient.

Royals' chase never really took off as their rejigged top order – R. Ashwin was sent in as the opener instead of Jos Buttler – failed to fire.

Buttler was unlucky to depart after he edged an Ellis delivery into his pads, only for it to pop back to the bowler, while Yashasvi Jaiswal and Ashwin offered much simpler catches to make their way back.

It was skipper Sanju Samson (42) who injected the Royals' chase with some vigour as he deployed the cut shot to great effect against the Kings' spinners. But Ellis struck the big blow again as he had Samson caught at long-off.

Local boy Riyan Parag contributed some lusty blows, much to the joy of an excited crowd, before he was caught in the deep off Ellis, as Kings furthered their grip on the game.

Stellar show: Ellis struck vital blows at crucial junctures to derail the Royals chase in a high-scoring game. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Next assignment

RR: April 8 **vs. DC**
Guwahati, 3.30 p.m.

PBKS: April 9 **vs. SRH**
Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

PUNJAB KINGS

Prabhsimran Singh c Buttler b Holder 60 *(34b, 7x4, 3x6)*, Shikhar Dhawan (not out) 86 *(56b, 9x4, 3x6)*, Bhanuka Rajapaksa retd. hurt 1 *(1b)*, Jitesh Sharma c Parag b Chahal 27 *(16b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Sikandar Raza b Ashwin 1 *(2b)*, Shahrukh Khan c Buttler b Holder 11 *(10b, 1x4)*, Sam Curran (not out) 1 *(2b)*; Extras (b-1, w-8, nb-1): 10; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 197.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-90 (Prabhsimran, 9.4 overs), 2-158 (Jitesh, 15.4), 3-159 (Sikandar, 16.1), 4-196 (Shahrukh, 19.4).

ROYALS BOWLING

Boult 4-0-38-0, Asif 4-0-54-0, Ashwin 4-0-25-1, Holder 4-0-29-2, Chahal 4-0-50-1.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Yashasvi Jaiswal c sub (Short) b Arshdeep 11 *(8b, 1x4, 1x6)*, R. Ashwin c Dhawan b Arshdeep 0 *(4b)*, Jos Buttler c & b Ellis 19 *(11b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Sanju Samson c sub (Short) b Ellis 42 *(25b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Devdutt Padikkal b Ellis 21 *(26b, 1x4)*, Riyan Parag c Shahrukh b Ellis 20 *(12b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Shimron Hetmyer run out 36 *(18b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Dhruv Jurel **(Impact Player in place of Chahal)** (not out) 32 *(15b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Jason Holder (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (b-1, w-9): 10; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 192.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-13 (Jaiswal, 1.3), 2-26 (Ashwin, 3.2), 3-57 (Buttler, 5.4), 4-91 (Samson, 10.6), 5-121 (Parag, 14.1), 6-124 (Padikkal, 14.6), 7-186 (Hetmyer, 19.3).

PUNJAB KINGS BOWLING

Curran 4-0-44-0, Arshdeep 4-0-47-2, Harpreet 2-0-15-0, Ellis 4-0-30-4, Rahul Chahar 4-0-31-0, Sikandar 2-0-24-0.

Toss: Royals; **PoM:** Ellis.
Punjab Kings won by five runs.

Depleted KKR hosts a well-balanced RCB

Key match-up: All eyes would be on the du Plessis-Southee face off as it could impact the final result. K.R. DEEPAK

Today's match

Kolkata Knight Riders vs. Royal Challengers

Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 30
KKR 16 | RCB 14

PREVIOUS MEETING

RCB won by **three wickets**, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders will look to overcome the disappointment of losing two key players as it faces Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Thursday.

Following its loss to Punjab Kings in the first match, KKR was jolted when Shreyas Iyer was ruled out of the season due to a back injury. Shakib Al Hasan's unavailability was another blow.

For its home encounter, KKR would take heart from the way it challenged PBKS while chasing a 190-plus target at Mohali.

The host's batting will revolve around captain Nitish Rana, Venkatesh Iyer, Afghan wicketkeeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Caribbean big-hitting all-rounder Andre Russell.

KKR's bowling is armed with pacers Tim Southee and Umesh Yadav and the spin duo of Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy.

On a pitch that may offer something for the batters and the speedsters, KKR bowlers need to contain the strong RCB batting line-up.

All-rounders Glenn Maxwell, Michael Bracewell and Shahbaz Ahmed provide RCB the balance and complement its potent attack, comprising Mohammad Siraj, 'home boy' Akash Deep, Harshal Patel and Karn Sharma.

RCB will be keen to march on.

Titans of the chase

Gujarat has won 10 of its 11 matches while pursuing a target

	Target	Score	Opponent
2022	159	161/5 (19.4 overs)	LSG
	190	190/4 (20 overs)	PBKS
	170	170/7 (19.5 overs)	CSK
	196	199/5 (20 overs)	SRH
	171	174/4 (19.3 overs)	RCB
	134	137/3 (19.1 overs)	CSK
	189	191/3 (19.3 overs)	RR
	131	133/3 (18.1 overs)	RR
2023	179	182/5 (19.2 overs)	CSK
	163	163/4 (18.1 overs)	DC

GT lost to MI by five runs chasing a target of 178 (2022)

> He has been batting beautifully. In two years, he will do something big in franchise cricket and hopefully for India
>
> **HARDIK PANDYA**
> Titans skipper on Sai Sudharsan

> Didn't have time to get jet-lagged. We were within range, it was a matter of three sixes
>
> **DAVID MILLER**

Embracing diversity in skills, identities, cultures and backgrounds through sport

Abhinav Bindra

When my two-decade-long sporting career came to a close with a fourth-place finish at the Olympic Games Rio 2016 – as I missed bronze by a whisker – what could have been a moment of crushing disappointment, was in fact one filled with immense gratitude.

Rivals, teammates, coaches, people from all parts of the world came up to me immediately after and thanked and congratulated me on my career, for competing hard, and for always being fair.

The respect and friendship that came my way made that fourth-place finish very, very easy to swallow. I realised then that, although I would no longer be a competitive shooter, sport and the Olympic values would never leave me.

The Olympics stand for a lifelong commitment to fair play, honesty and integrity, and are a testament to the fact that sport can, indeed, help make the world a better place for everyone.

Strong belief

My strong belief is that being an Olympian requires you commit to the Olympic values and pass on the benefits to as many young girls and boys as you can.

It is with this mission in mind that the Abhinav Bindra Foundation launched the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP), in partnership with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the School & Mass Education Department of the Government of Odisha, a year ago.

As the anniversary approaches, all of us involved in delivering OVEP to nearly 50,000 children in 90 government schools in the state of Odisha find ourselves filled with joy and optimism.

Spreading the message: Bindra and the IOC delegates spent time with children of Govt. High School, VSS Nagar, Bhubaneswar, as part of the OVEP initiative. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The results and the feedback have been inspirational. Physical activity is up by 50% across these schools.

A government primary school with low attendance witnessed an increase in student numbers by 12 per cent just three months after the introduction of OVEP's vibrant and novel sessions. We've had boys come up to us and candidly say that they didn't know girls could play so well.

When a mixed-gender, inter-school OVEP tournament was held, about 60 per cent of the team captains were girls – certainly not the norm in India.

In one school, OVEP brought a differently abled student onto the football field, and today he represents his district and says he wants to spread the Olympic values wherever he goes.

We began the programme in April 2022, when a team from the IOC's Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage "trained the trainers", equipping more than 150 physical education teachers with the tools necessary to deliver the programme. This was done to build capacity, and also to ensure that the programme would not be a one-off delivered by "experts" who would log in the numbers and vanish.

Along with ensuring the increase of physical activity and physical literacy, with these "master trainers", sport became the medium through which lessons around inclusivity and respect were turned into real-life experience for children and teachers. The weekly PE class turned into something novel and fun.

OVEP comes with a few basic must-dos: no matter what sport is played, every student – regardless of gender or physical ability – must be involved. OVEP schools take part in major team sports like football, hockey, and also indigenous sports like kabaddi, kho-kho, pithu, laghori and even cricket. The fundamental principle is inclusivity, activity and collaboration, with scoring, winning and losing being secondary. For example, in co-educational schools, girls must be part of every team.

In OVEP football, the solo glory goal amounts to zero; goals can only be scored with a minimum number of players being involved in moving the ball forward. OVEP has already taught us how the smallest of changes and the simplest of ideas carried out consistently can have the deepest impact.

School children, by the thousands, have been receptive, enthusiastic and full of ideas, and demonstrate to us every week the power of sport at work. After such results, we cannot and will not stop. We will scale up in this upcoming second year and take OVEP to 250 schools, hoping to impact more than 150,000 school children.

You may still harbour doubts as to whether a school sports programme being delivered in Odisha can relate to the Olympics. Yes, it can, and it does. I believe every child in India has something to gain from sport and the Olympic Movement.

The more we develop as a sporting nation, with sport in our systems, the greater the pool of talent we will have to generate future Olympians. Moreover, imprinting the essence of Olympism in young minds is invaluable. To instil the idea of embracing diversity in skills, identities, cultures and backgrounds through sport would be priceless in the Indian context. Finding common ground through sport – with physical and mental teamwork, camaraderie, partnership, experiencing highs and lows together – that is the ultimate goal.

What is a vibrant, diverse, noisy, busy school yard but the echo of the spirit that permeates through every Olympic Games and touches the heart of every athlete who competes in it? No individual is too big to fit into an Olympic village, no idea is too small to not be given a chance. The Olympics always show us that our world will be what we make of it.

INBRIEF

Milne, Seifert star in NZ's series-levelling win

New Zealand demolished Sri Lanka by nine wickets in the second T20I to level the series on Wednesday, as opener Tim Seifert finished on 79 not out. Man-of-the-Match Adam Milne took 5/26.

The scores: Sri Lanka 141 in 19 overs (Dhananjaya de Silva 37, Kusal Perera 35, Adam Milne 5/26) lost to New Zealand 146/1 in 14.4 overs (Tim Seifert 79 n.o. Chad Bowes 31).

Mushfiqur ton puts Bangladesh in control

Mushfiqur Rahim's 126 runs salvaged early wobbles from Bangladesh to put it in control of its one-off Test against Ireland on Wednesday,

The scores: Ireland 214 & 27/4 in 17 overs vs Bangladesh 369 in 80.3 overs (Mushfiqur Rahim 126, Shakib al Hasan 87, Mehidy Hasan 55, Andy McBrine 6/118).

Udhyanidhi flags off Unifi Capital Offshore Regatta

The second Unifi Capital Offshore Regatta was flagged off by Udhayanidhi Stalin, Minister of Youth Welfare and Sports Development, Government of Tamil Nadu, in Chennai on Wednesday. The Regatta, being held under the aegis of the Yachting Association of India and organised by the National J/80 Class Association (NJCA), Royal Madras Yacht Club (RMYC) and Royal Madras Yacht Club Ennore Centre (RMYC EC), will conclude on April 9. The event will have eight teams in the fray. Maj. Gen. Indrabalan, ADG NCC, Dr. Atulya Misra, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary to TN Govt., Capt. Vivek Shanbhag, Hony. Secretary, Royal Madras Yacht Club, Sunil Paliwal, IAS, Chairperspn, Chennai Port Trust, and Capt. Jitendra Dixit, Jt. Hony. Secretary, YAI, were also present.

Saina makes first round exit from Orleans Masters

Saina Nehwal crashed out of the Orleans Masters badminton after a 21-16, 21-14 first round loss to Turkey's Neslihan Yigit at Orleans (France) on Wednesday. Mithun Manjunath, Priyanshu Rajawat, Aakarshi Kashyap and Tanya Hemanth progressed to the second round. Sameer Verma lost 19-21, 21-19, 21-17 to Ireland's Nhat Nguyen. Tasnim Mir lost to Yvonne Li 20-22, 21-13, 21-5.

Sports Ministry's financial assistance for 12 para shuttlers

Mission Olympic Cell has approved financial assistance to 12 para-badminton players, including Pramod Bhagat and Mansi Joshi, for participation in the upcoming Brazil para-badminton International. Others to get the assistance are Krishna Nagar, Sukant Kadam, Nitesh Kumar, Manoj Sarkar, Suhas Yathiraj, Tarun Dhillon, Mandeep Kaur, Nithya Sree, Parul Parmar and Manisha Ramadass.

AGORC FC blanks Tilak Memorial in style

AGORC FC defeated Tilak Memorial FC 3-0 in the BDFA A-division football league in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

The result: AGORC FC 3 (Sudarshan V. Lokur 14, S. Santosh 19, J. Praveen 46 bt Tilak Memorial FC 0).

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 4.30 a.m.
Bangladesh vs Ireland: Only Test, day 3, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

'Letting captaincy go played a big role in Kohli relaxing'

When he is having fun, the natural talent takes over and he scores runs at ease, and I think the best is yet to come, says de Villiers

IPL-16

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Exceptional talent: De Villiers said he was in awe when he saw Tilak's innings against RCB. K. MURALI KUMAR

Legendary South African player A.B. de Villiers has backed his former Royal Challengers Bangalore teammate Virat Kohli to have a big IPL season.

Kohli started strongly with an unbeaten 82 to help his side beat Mumbai Indians by eight wickets in the first game.

"I just feel this season he has come looking fresh. I saw a few interviews in which he was laughing more than ever. I think letting captaincy go last year played a big role in him just relaxing," said de Villiers, who is in the country as an IPL Expert for JioCinema, during a media round-table on Wednesday.

Fantastic captain

"He was a fantastic captain, but he did it for a long time internationally and in the IPL, which can be daunting. You don't have time to chill. I think that's his mantra for the season: 'go out and have fun'. When he is having fun, the natural talent takes over and he scores runs at ease. We will see some fireworks this season, and I think the best is yet to come," added the former Proteas captain.

Speaking about some of the youngsters who have impressed so far, de Villiers was all praise for Yashavsi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma and B. Sai Sudharsan, whose half-century on Tuesday helped Gujarat Titans beat Delhi Capitals.

"Jaiswal looks very good. Tilak Varma, I was in awe when I saw him play the other day. He made it look simple and had a lot of time in his batting. Sai Sudharsan is very talented.

"He kept the whole innings together and allowed someone like David Miller to express himself in the back end. It shows there is lots of maturity in the youngster," said the 39-year-old.

Ruturaj makes a bowlers' job difficult: Hussey

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

In the age of power-hitting and innovative shots like scoops and ramps behind the wicket, Chennai Super Kings opener Ruturaj Gaikwad has had tremendous success in the shortest format of the game by being conventional.

The 26-year-old has started the 2023 season of the IPL with a bang, leading the run charts after two matches with scores of 92 and 57.

CSK batting coach Michael Hussey, who has worked with him closely in the last few years, praised Ruturaj's exploits, and spoke highly about how he has grown since joining the team in 2019.

"It's been amazing to watch him develop since he was first here at CSK to where he is. I love his game and how he goes about it," said Hussey during a recent chat with reporters.

"He doesn't try to become a big slogger or anything. He plays beautiful cricket shots, has an all-round game and is slowly adding more power. He is making it very difficult for bowlers to bowl to him because he can also hit good balls for fours or sixes," added the former Australian cricketer.

> It's been amazing to watch him develop since he was first here at CSK to where he is
> **MICHAEL HUSSEY**
> CSK batting coach

Ruturaj burst onto the scene with impressive half-centuries at the back end of the IPL in 2020 before becoming the highest run-getter in 2021 with 635 runs.

He played a vital role in Super Kings winning the title two years ago. The 2022 edition was a subdued one, with 368 runs from 14 matches, for the opener.

Former India cricketer Sudhir Naik passes away

Sports Bureau
MUMBAI

Sudhir Naik. FILE PHOTO

Former India opening batter and Mumbai captain Sudhir Naik passed away on Wednesday evening at a city hospital following a brief illness. Naik was 78.

Naik, who played three Tests and two ODIs in 1974-75, was hospitalised after suffering a fall at home on March 24. He lost the battle on Wednesday evening, confirmed Mumbai Cricket Association secretary Ajinkya Naik.

A man who wore many hats on and off the field, Naik was a doyen of Mumbai cricket. Besides his limited success in international cricket, he was a part of five Ranji Trophy title-winning sides, including the one in 1970-71 as captain.

After his retirement in 1977-78, Naik groomed an array of First Class and international cricketers at the National Cricket Club. His most famous proteges include the likes of Zaheer Khan, Wasim Jaffer and Nilesh Kulkarni. He remained the guiding light all through Zaheer's career ever since the left-arm pacer came to Mumbai from Shrirampur, in rural Maharashtra, in search of cricket coaching.

"It's a big loss for me personally. I wonder whether I would have become the cricketer I did had I not met him," Zaheer, who met Naik at the hospital last week, told *The Hindu*. "A very uncomplicated personality, passionate cricketer and a supporter of cricketers. It's a huge loss for the cricket fraternity, especially me."

Masters brings golf's divided best back together for engrossing battle

Agence France-Presse
AUGUSTA

In right earnest: McIlroy during a practice round prior to the 2023 Masters at the Augusta National Golf Club. AFP

The world's greatest golfers face each other on Thursday for the first time since the bitter LIV Golf-PGA Tour split divided the sport and appropriately it is the timeless tranquillity of Augusta National that provides the arena.

Given the tradition of the Masters tournament, with the famous winner's green jacket, the striking absence of advertising, the pristine course and the palpable sense of historic significance, it is perhaps not surprising that both sides of the divide caused by the breakaway Saudi-backed LIV Golf League have been observing an informal cease-fire.

Legal battles

Legal battles remain to be fought and the name-calling may well resume next week but the words of those involved in the first major tournament of the year have been a refreshing acknowledgement that Augusta is no place for public squabbling.

"I think this tournament is bigger than all of that," said Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, the world number two.

McIlroy has been rotating top spot in golf's rankings with current World No.1 Scottie Scheffler and Spaniard Jon Rahm and that trio is among the favourites to triumph on Sunday at the end of what is forecast to be a rain-affected four days.

McIlroy would complete the career Grand Slam with a victory on Sunday while Rahm would become the fourth Spaniard to win at Augusta after Seve Ballesteros, Jose Maria Olazabal and Sergio Garcia.

Three-time Masters winner Phil Mickelson, 52, would be a surprise challenger at this stage of his career but Augusta always has room for nostalgia and the veterans never need reminding that in 1986, Jack Nicklaus won at the age of 46.

More recently, in 2019, Tiger Woods became the second oldest player to win the tournament, with his remarkable comeback victory at the age of 43.

Woods, though, is sadly now in the nostalgia category, his multiple injuries restricting his participation in the PGA Tour and leaving him worrying about if his body will survive four rounds and if this might be his final Masters.

"I don't know how many more I have in me," said the 15-time major winner, who was in a reflective mood.

"It's such a special place and it means so much to me in my heart to be able to come here and play this golf course and just appreciate the memories that I've had here."

Former winners Nicklaus, Gary Player and Tom Watson will get the tournament under way on Thursday with the ceremonial start.

Chelsea-Liverpool serve up a dull draw; Brighton motors along; Villa sinks Leicester

PREMIER LEAGUE

Associated Press
LONDON

Huge save: Liverpool's Konate clears off the goalline off an effort from Chelsea's Kovacic. AFP

Another 0-0 stalemate between Chelsea and Liverpool. Another match highlighting the sharp decline of two of England's top teams who, at this rate, are unlikely to be playing in the Champions League next season.

Chelsea was playing its first game since the firing of Graham Potter on Sunday but little was different under his interim replacement, Bruno Saltor.

Indeed, there was something very familiar about the teams serving up a goalless draw. That has been the score in this fixture in their last four meetings – both Premier League matches this season and both domestic cup finals last season, which were ultimately won by Liverpool via penalty shootouts.

The top four, and qualification for the Champions League, is looking increasingly unlikely for both teams.

A 2-1 defeat at home to Aston Villa dropped Leicester into next-to-last place and means the team has lost six of its last seven league games, drawing the other one.

Villa climbed to seventh place under Unai Emery and has won five of its last six league games.

Bournemouth dropped back into the relegation zone after losing 2-0 at home to Brighton.

Brighton moved up to sixth place, four points off the top four, and could yet challenge for Champions League qualification.

The results: Bournemouth 0 lost to Brighton 2 (Ferguson 28, Enciso 90); Chelsea 0 drew with Liverpool 0; Leeds 2 (Harrison 20, Sinisterra 45) bt Nottingham Forest 1 (Mangala 12); Leicester 1 (Barnes 35) lost to Aston Villa 2 (Watkins 24, Traore 87).

Goryachkina tops three-way tie to win

WOMEN'S GP

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

Russian favourite Aleksandra Goryachkina topped a three-way tie to win the third leg of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess title here on Wednesday.

Peace prevailed on the boards involving the three overnight leaders – Goryachkina, Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kazakhstan) and Zhu Jiner (China) – and they shared €37,000.

After Goryachkina and K. Humpy, the top two seeds, settled for a draw, the other two Indians – D. Harika and R. Vaishali – were at the receiving end of the two decisive games on the final day.

Eventually, Humpy (6th) finished ahead of Harika (8th) and Vaishali (10th).

The results (Indians unless stated): 11th round: Aleksandra Goryachkina (FIDE, 6) drew with K. Humpy (4.5); Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 6) drew with Kateryna Lagno (FIDE, 5); Nino Batsiashvili (Geo, 3.5) drew with Zhu Jiner (Chn, 6); R. Vaishali (2) lost to Nana Dzagnidze (Geo, 3.5); D. Harika (3.5) lost to Polina Shuvalova (FIDE, 5).

Final standings (with prize-money in euros): 1. Goryachkina (12,334), 2. Assaubayeva (12,333), 3. Zhu (12,333), 4. Lagno (7,375), 5. Shuvalova (7,375), 6. Humpy (5,750), 7. Batsiashvili (4,500), 8. Harika (4,500) 9. Dzagnidze (4,000), 10. Vaishali (3,500).